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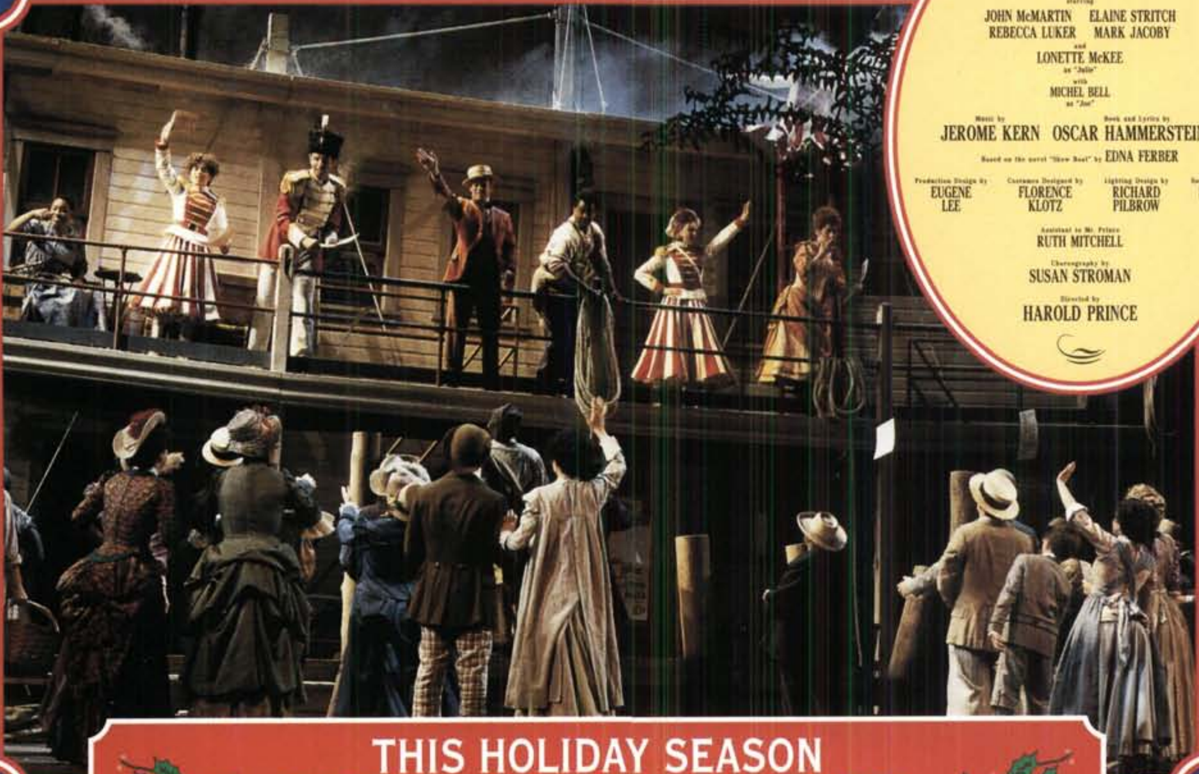

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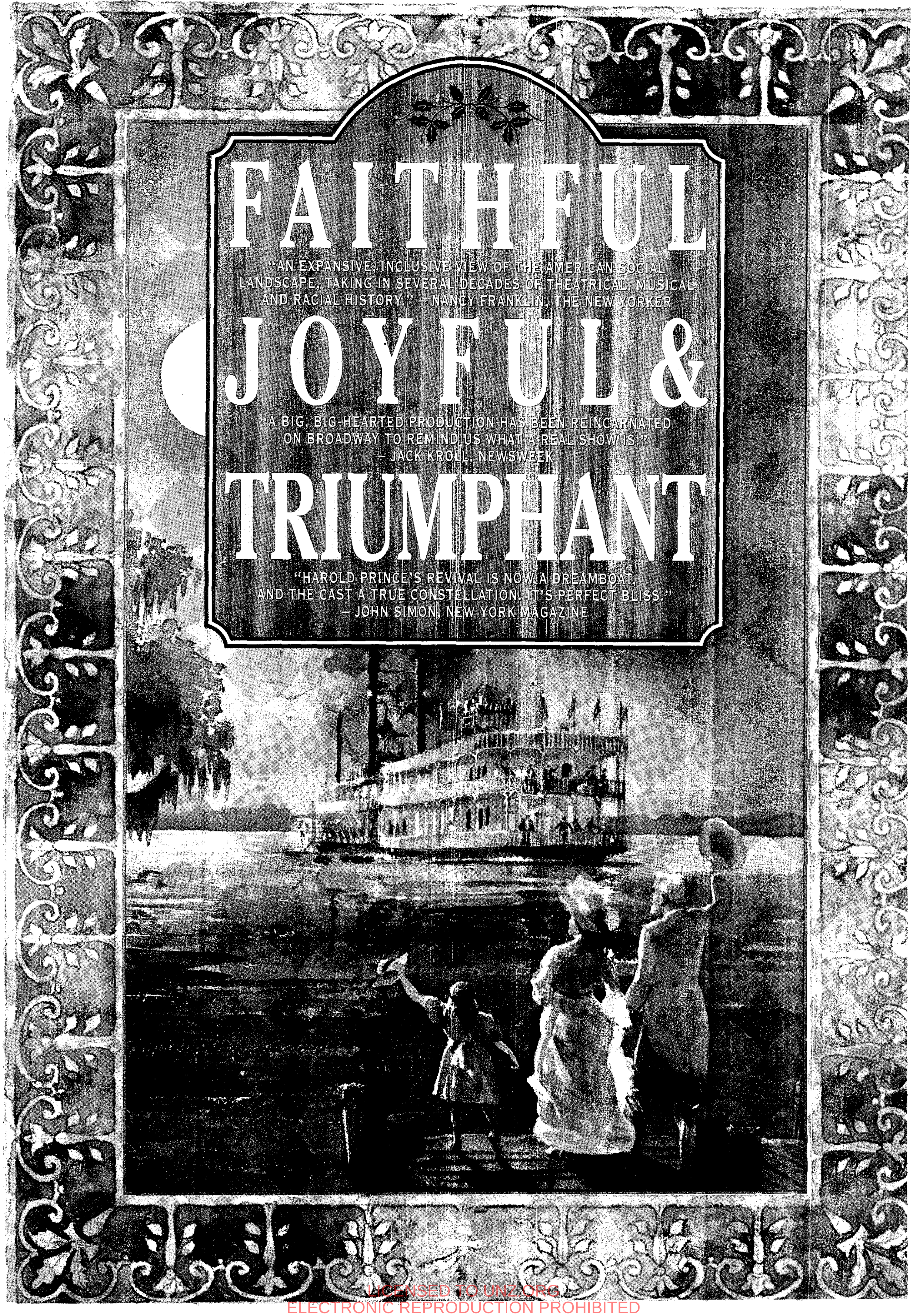

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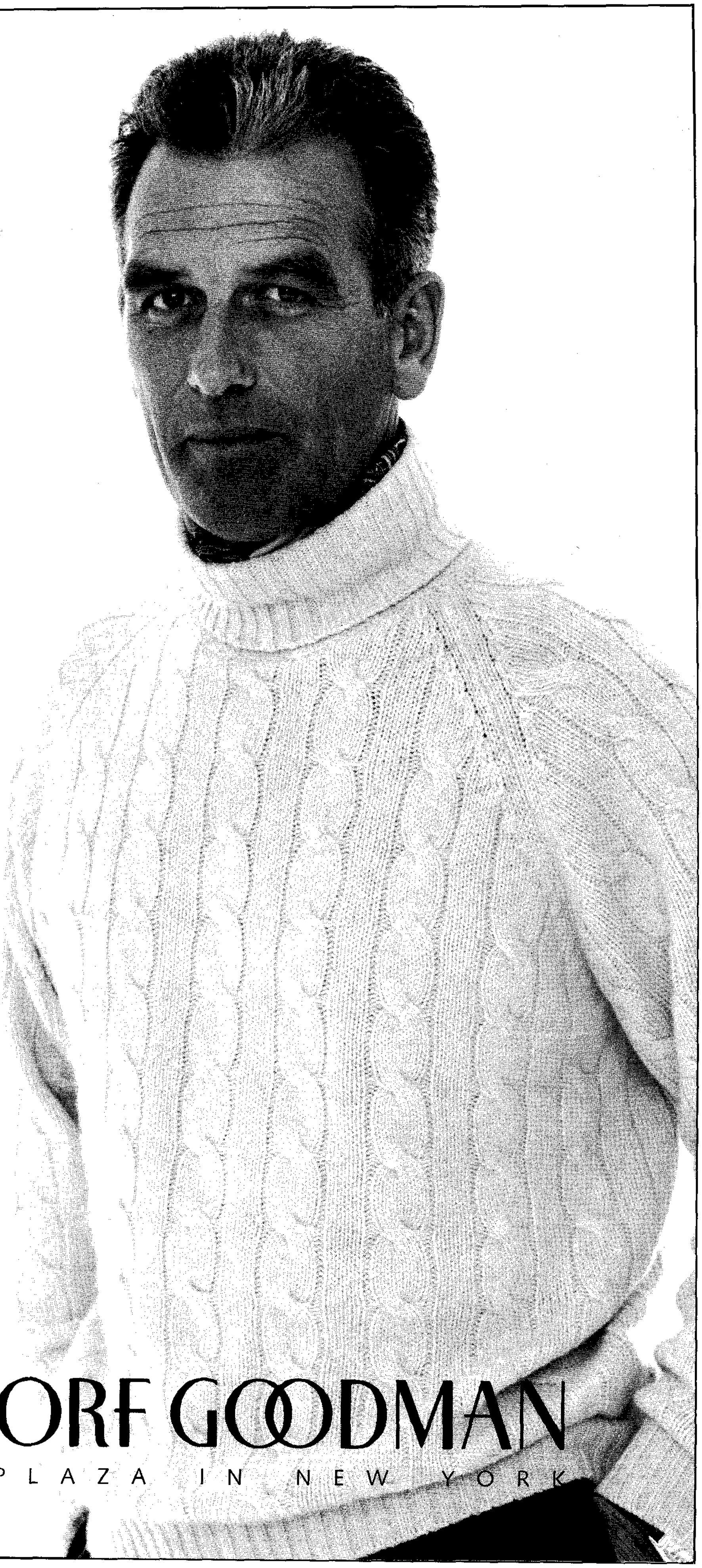

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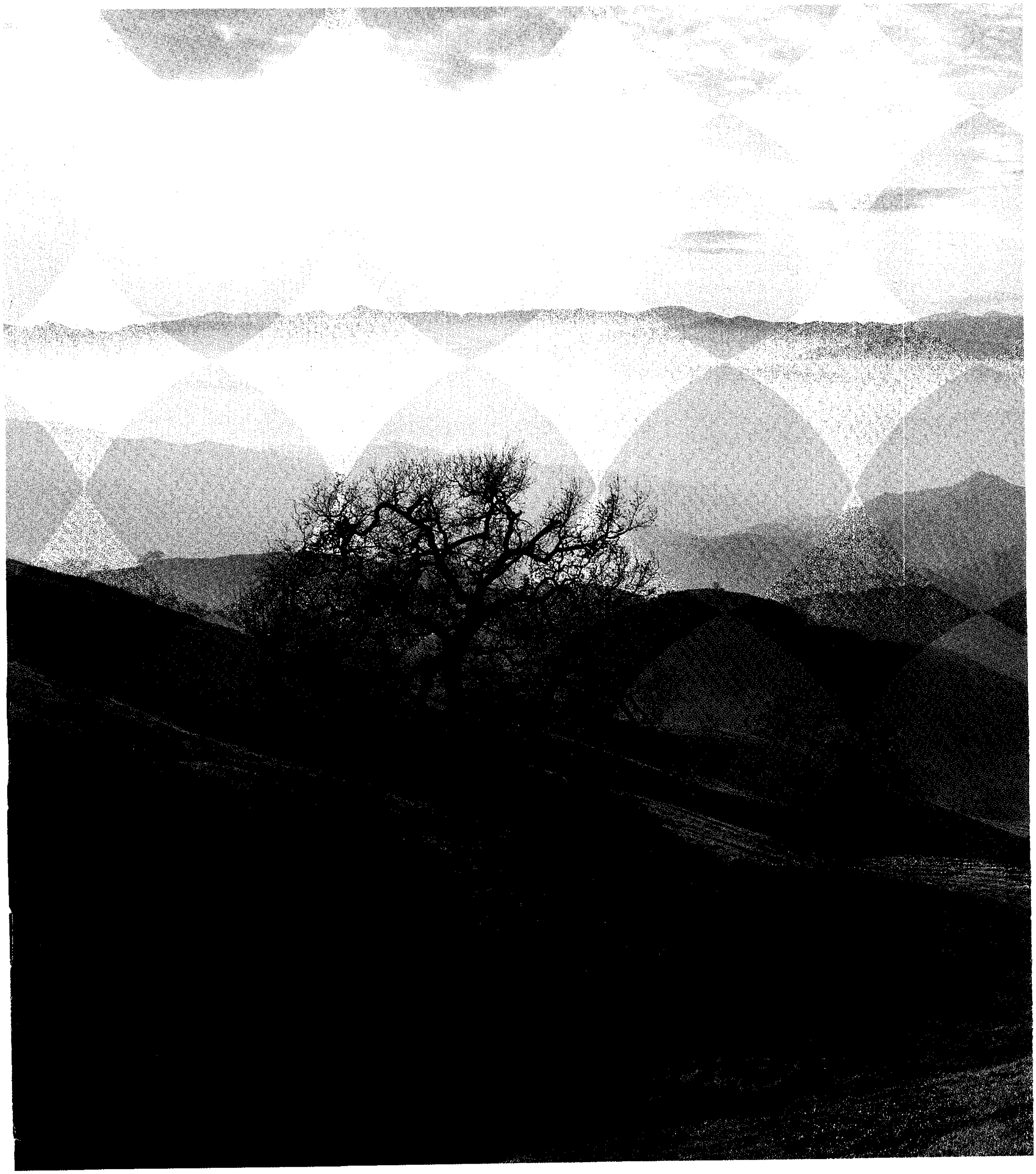

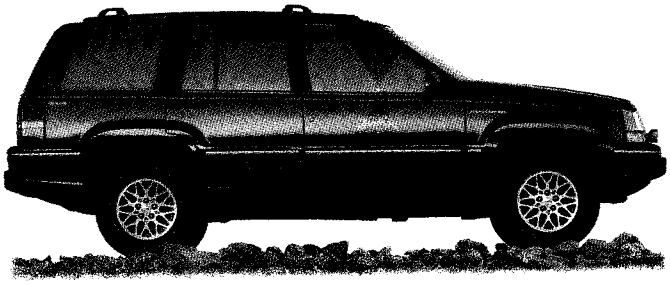

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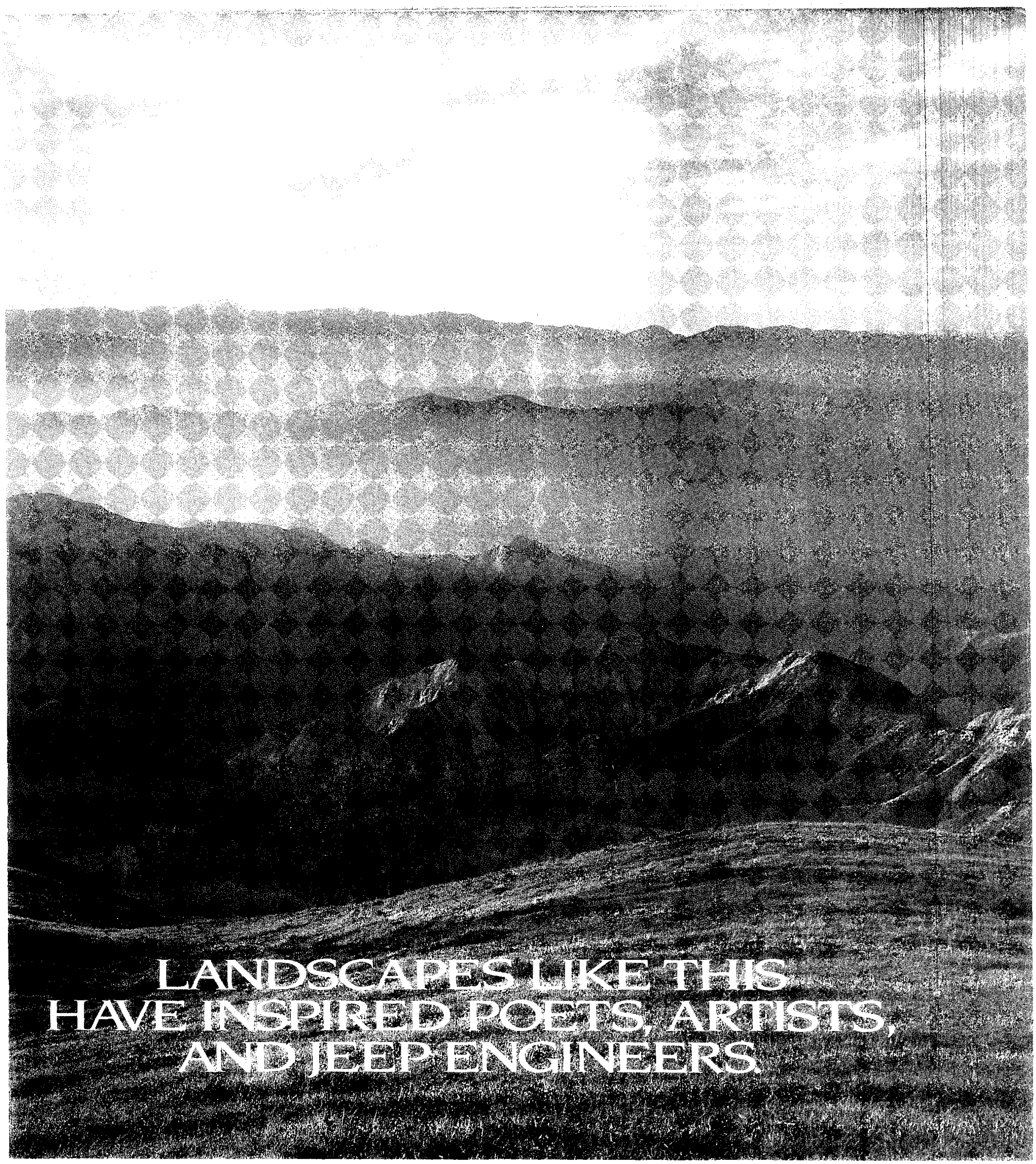
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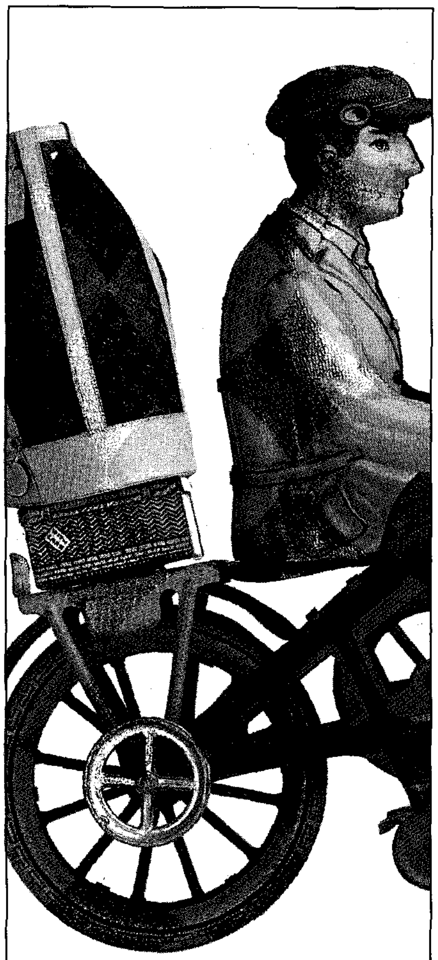

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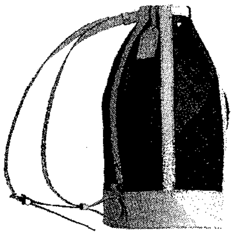

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THE NEW YORKER

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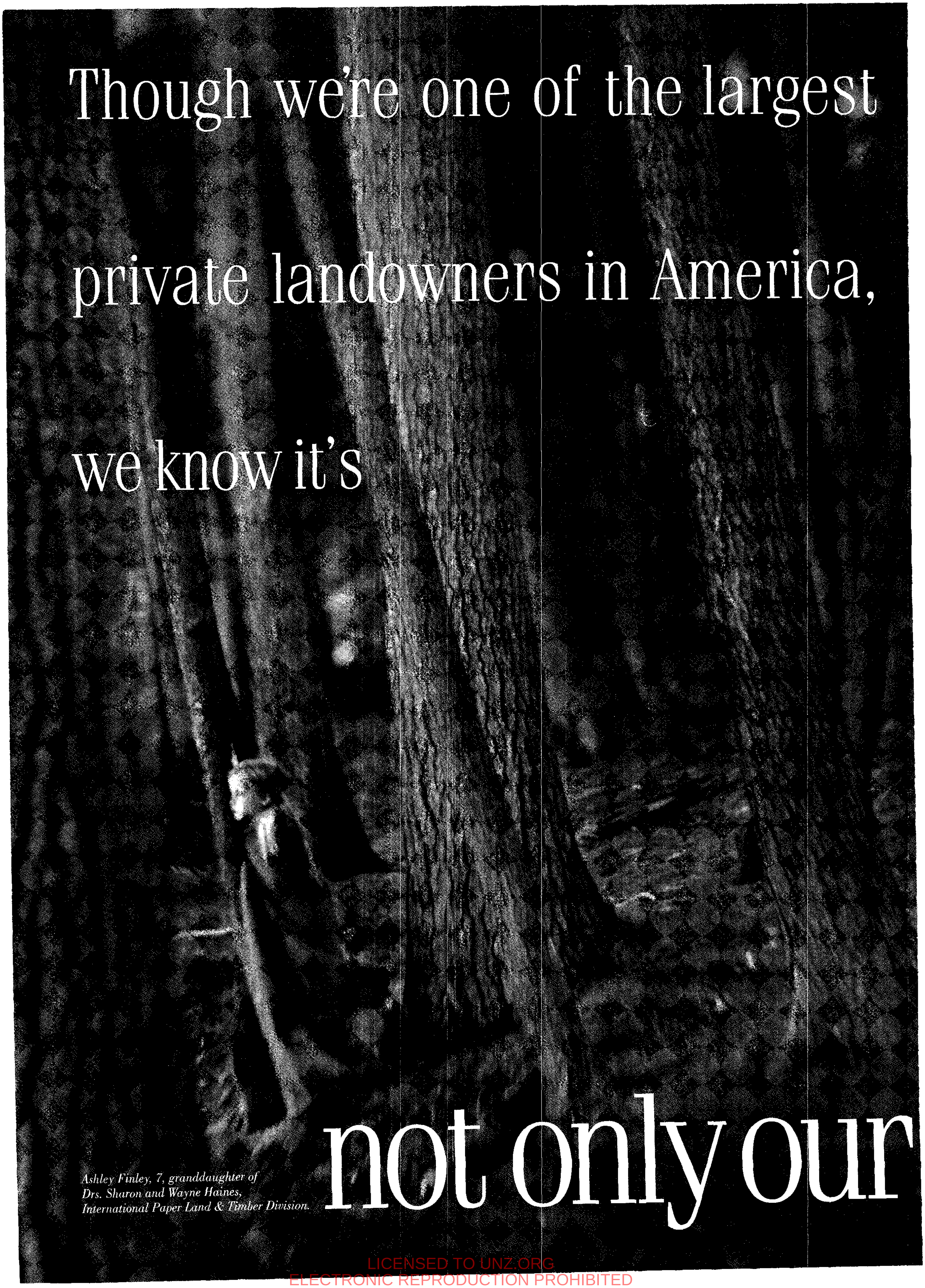
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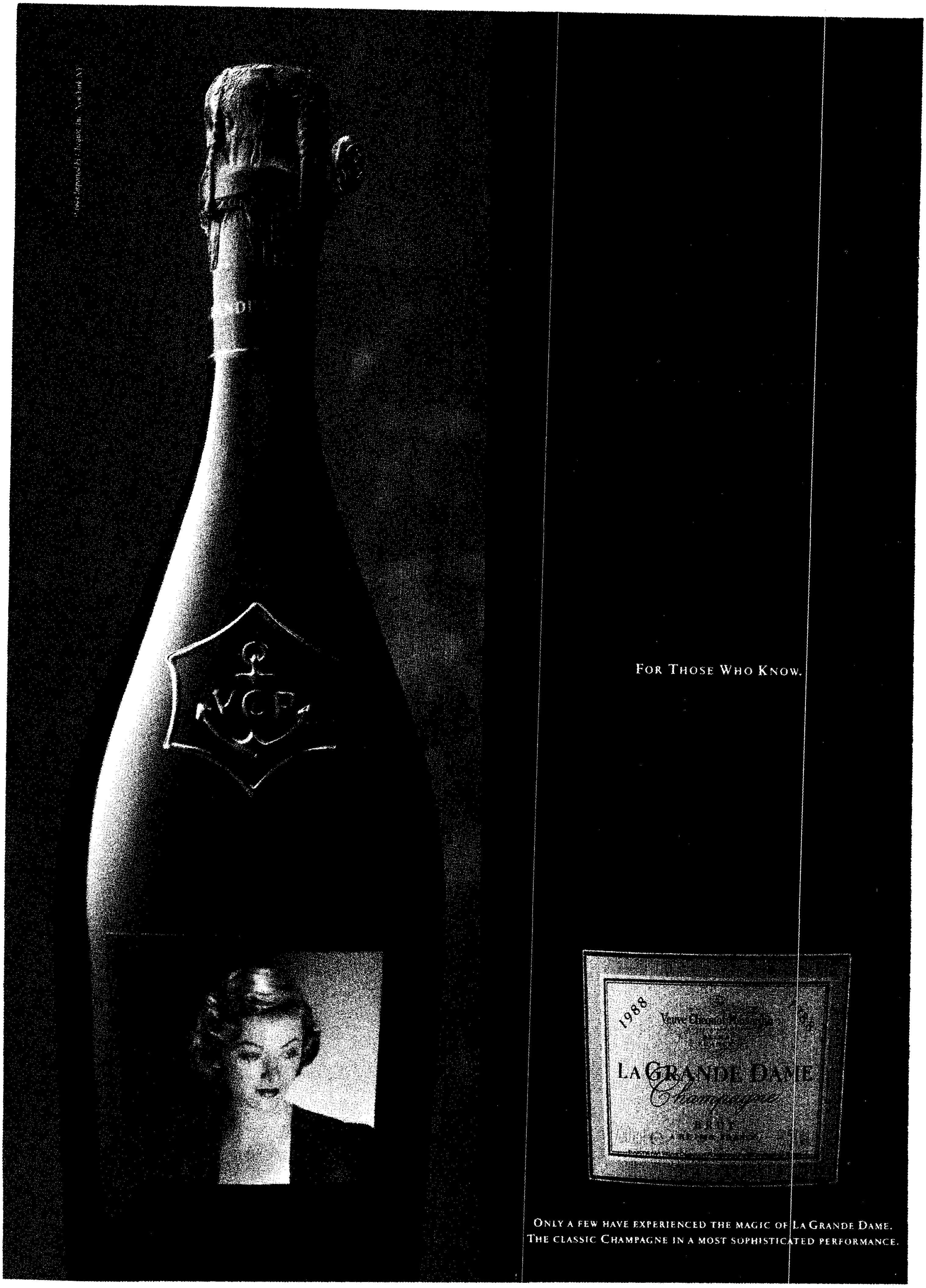
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COMMENT

ECHOES OF '48

Ben-Gurion (and Shamir) have lessons for Arafat.

FOR nearly half a century, extremists on both sides of the struggle over the lands claimed by Israelis and Palestinians have made war on the very concept of compromise. Whether the perpetrators have been Arabs (as in October's Hamas outrage in Tel Aviv which killed twenty-two Israelis) or Jews (as in last February's massacre of twenty-nine Muslim worshippers in Hebron), their signature has always been the same: an act of extreme violence calculated to deepen the bitterness to the point where accommodation begins to look like treason. Whatever the sources of their fervor, the zealots are dangerous anachronisms, whose willingness to kill and die for their passionately held convictions presents a constant danger to a fragile peace process.

For many years, the great majority of the violent attacks on peace and the makers of peace in the region have come from Arab terrorists, so it is instructive to note that the first attempt at international mediation came to an end, nearly fifty years ago, in a hail of gunfire from Israeli extremists. Their target was the first United Nations mediator—Count Folke Bernadotte, of Sweden. In the early evening of September 17, 1948, Count Bernadotte's convoy was trapped in a narrow Jerusalem street by four men dressed in Israeli Army uniforms. The gunmen killed Bernadotte and another United Nations official and fled; they were never brought to justice. New York's leading Yiddish daily, the *Forward*, headlined its editorial for September 19, 1948, "A BLEMISH ON THE JEWISH LAND," and the editors wrote, "Jewish Eretz Israel has struggled with the question of terror for decades, and has not been able to control it."

Israel's founding Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, on being faced with the prospect of a serious rupture in the delicate fabric of his four-month-old state, struck an agreement with the assassination squad: freedom from prosecution in exchange for the terrorists' promise to cease and desist, and peacefully rejoin Israeli society. The man who had pulled the trigger, Yehoshua Cohen, became Ben-Gurion's friend and bodyguard late in the old statesman's life. And the organizer of the assassination, Yitzhak Shamir, eventually became Prime Minister himself.

Shamir was one of three leaders of a terrorist band known as Lehi, the He-

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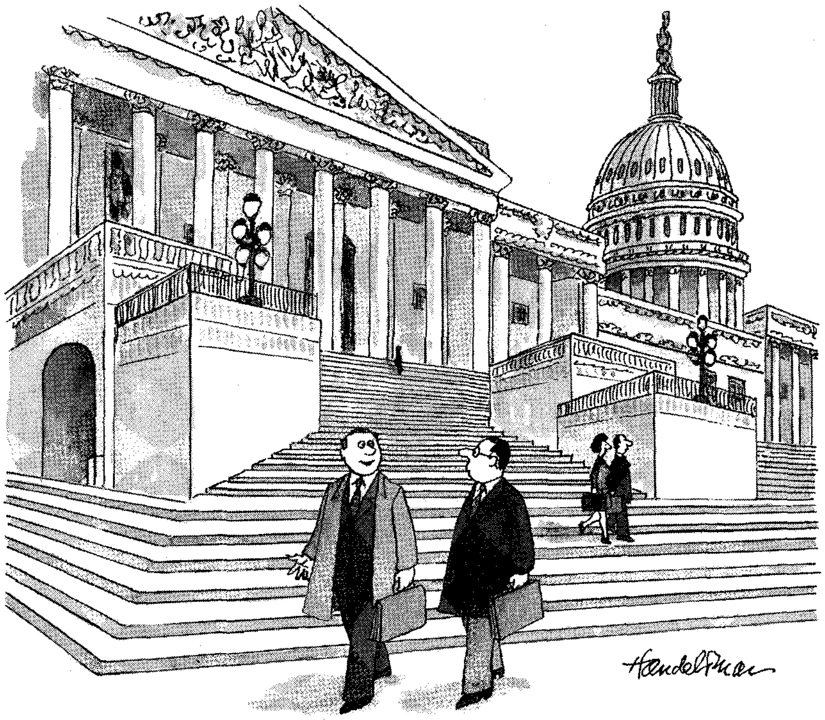


"Hey, the Constitution isn't engraved in stone."

• •

brew acronym for Fighters for the Freedom of Israel. More commonly called the Stern Gang, after Avraham Stern, who had founded it during the dark wartime year of 1940, the underground army never numbered more than a few hundred. An independent Israel, free of any foreign presence and with Jerusalem as its capital, was the Stern Gang's goal. Its weapon was a traditional resort of the powerless: terrorism—later to become, in far more indiscriminate form, the hallmark of Israel's most desperate enemies, the P.L.O. and, now, Hamas. Stern's explosive rhetoric and uncompromising nationalism foreshadowed those of today's Palestinian radicals. Like them, Shamir's underground hated what the United Nations mediator stood for: compromise, conciliation, the abandonment of maximalist demands in the service of turning enemies into neighbors.

Like Hamas's trained killers, the men of the Stern Gang trusted no one but themselves. They contemned David Ben-Gurion, revered by so many other Jews, as a cowardly trimmer. The Stern Gang's ruthlessness was forged in the Holocaust; Hamas's killers have learned their craft in the corrosive refugee camps that dot the Middle East. Hamas's suspicion of Arafat echoes Shamir's hostility toward Ben-Gurion and his Labor Party four decades ago. And Hamas's attempt to destroy Arafat's alliance with Israel is reminiscent of the Stern Gang's threat to Ben-Gurion's diplomacy.

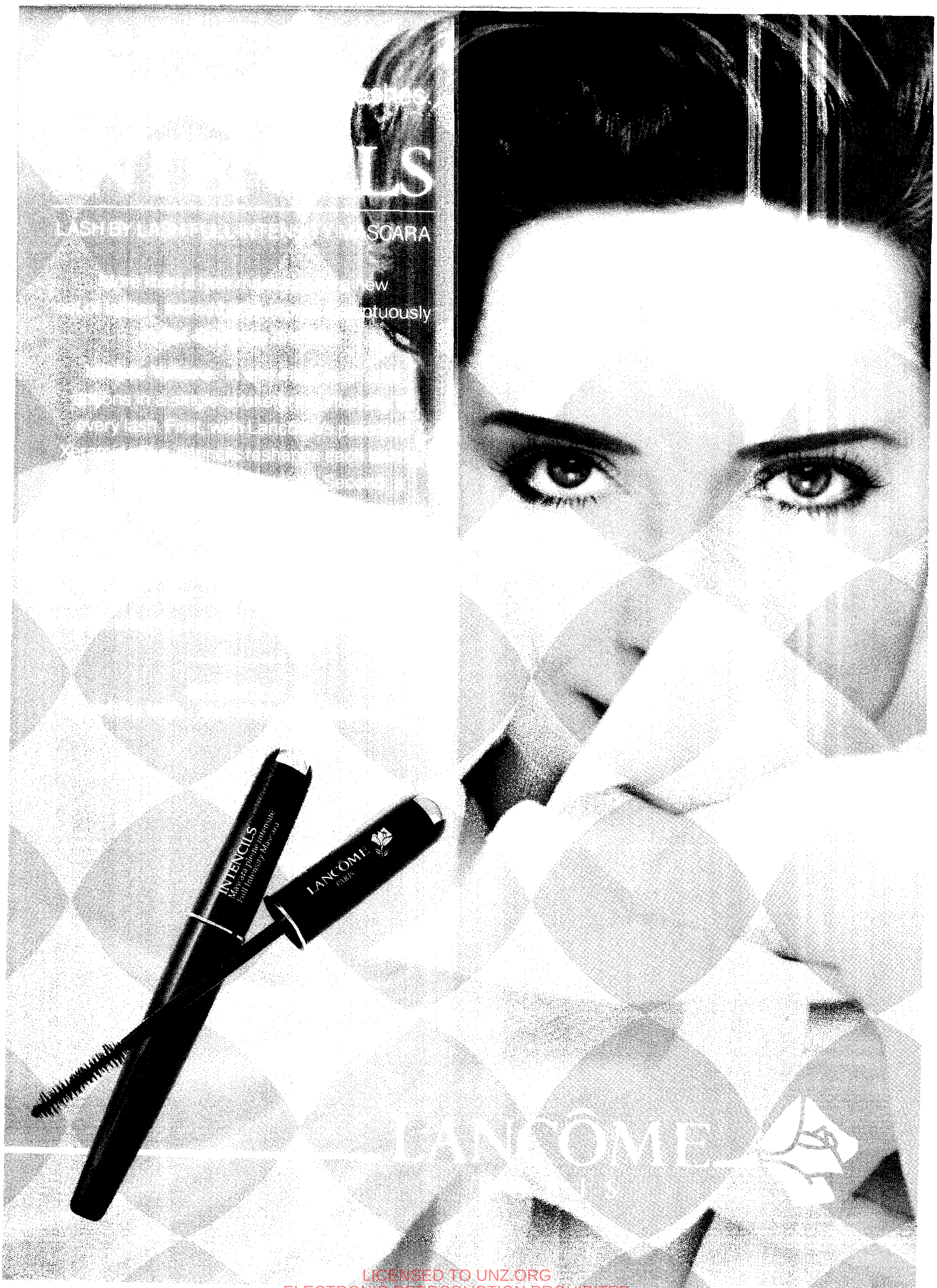
In 1948, the terrorists achieved their immediate political aim: the assassination of Count Bernadotte presaged the end of the U.N.'s attempts at mediation. A year later, the search for a comprehensive Middle East peace had been effectively abandoned. For decades afterward, the United States and the other big powers were both unwilling and unable to do much more than contain the struggle. The Middle East was whipsawed between sudden wars and uneasy truces until Jimmy Carter brokered the Camp David accords. And then the search for a comprehensive peace was abandoned once again—until Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, his foreign minister Shimon Peres, and Arafat decided to stake their political (and perhaps their actual) lives on it.

Ben-Gurion, a supremely pragmatic statesman, never lost sight of the ultimate goal, which was a strong and secure Israel. "Rogues and cowards," he called the terrorists who gunned down Count Bernadotte, and the day after the assassination he moved to outlaw Lehi. Yet, for the sake of Israel's survival, he was willing to deal with Shamir and his gunmen if they would meet his terms. Now Rabin, under mounting pressure to fight Hamas's fire with fire, has also shown restraint. "Bereavement unites us," he said recently to a mixed Arab and Israeli audience. But bereavement can also divide, and that is precisely what zealots on both sides are counting on.

The world was outraged by Folke Bernadotte's assassination, and the United Nations was permanently tarnished by the failure of its first mediation. But out of this potentially disastrous first chapter in the young state's life Prime Minister Ben-Gurion managed to salvage what was most important to Israel: reconciliation among its feuding factions. In stark contrast to Arafat's often unseemly ambiguities, however, Ben-Gurion minced no words. "Low schemers murdered the U.N. envoy," he told the State Council six days after the mediator's assassination. "This despicable crime is all the more horrible because it is aimed at the supreme human institution of our time, the U.N." But the roots of Ben-Gurion's new state were firmly planted in respect for the rule of law and the democratic principles of Labor Zionism. Arafat's ability to maneuver is desperately handicapped by the absence of such traditions within his own political community, and by the fact that his maximalist rivals, unlike Ben-Gurion's, have a mass following. Arafat must walk a fine line both to maintain control of his movement and to keep the peace process moving forward. Last week's shootings of Palestinian demonstrators by Palestinian police in Gaza show how clumsy his efforts to find that balance have been.

Rabin and Peres face a similar, though lesser, challenge from religious extremists within their own camp. Realpolitik does not enter into the thinking of people whose point of reference is God's Biblical promise to Abraham that the Hebrews' land, Eretz Israel, shall stretch all the way to the Euphrates. Hamas's fighters are possessed of an equally fierce attachment to the same sliver of land and have vowed to destroy any agreement that denies them any part of it. There are fitful signs that Arafat is willing to follow what might be called the Ben-Gurion–Shamir model, but no such signs have yet come from Hamas and the killers in its ranks.

—Kati Marton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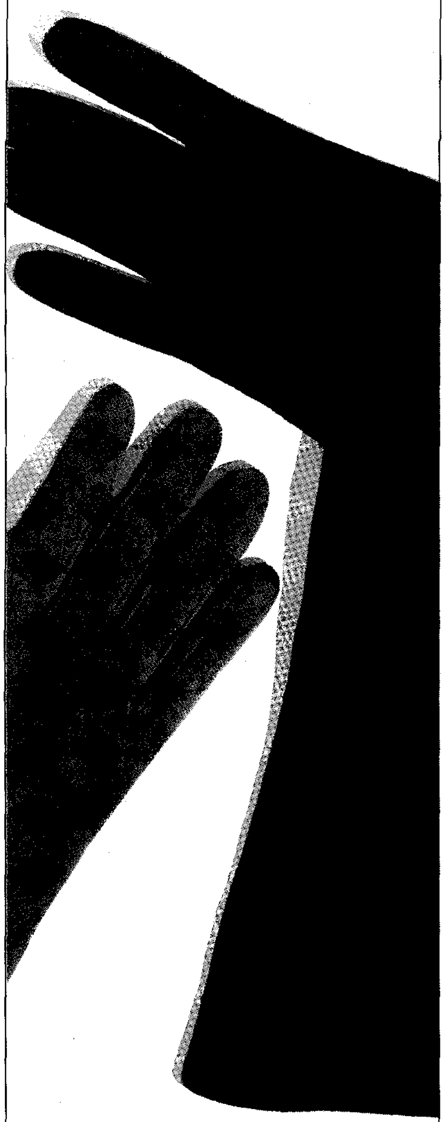

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IN THE MAIL

DISABUSE YOUR ILLUSION

James B. Stewart's "Grand Illusion" (October 31st) maligns my career, my marriage, and my integrity. He presents my life and work as a Potemkin village of elaborate props magically held together to convey a false image. Mr. Stewart seems to believe he has discovered a real truth that thousands of investors, clients, and employees missed for decades.

In fact, his piece is the "grand illusion." He refuses to include or manipulates the information that would scuttle his thesis.

While the article is largely about my work, Mr. Stewart's blithe commentary on my marriage is a telling indication of his treatment of less sensitive matters. Not only can I not recall his asking me one question about my marriage, he has never spoken to my wife. Instead, he surgically selects a couple of paragraphs from a long article, written eight years before I met my wife, in which I noted that a woman's appearance matters to me. He concludes from that statement that "a certain distance between image and reality seems to have surfaced even in the most intimate aspect of Whittle's life: his quest for love and marriage." If Mr. Stewart had cared to ask, he would know that my love for my wife doesn't vaguely resemble his implications. His article is filled with such cynical constructions.

As for my business career, Mr. Stewart does not account for several major anomalies. For example, is it an illusion that eight million students in twelve thousand schools now receive news via Channel One? Are those three hundred and fifty thousand television sets we installed in classrooms real or imaginary? And if Channel One is a mirage why did a respected investor just pay two hundred and forty million dollars for it? An in-depth discussion of how Channel One was built would have made the substance of our company all too obvious and thrown Mr. Stewart's illusion theory into disarray.

Similarly, Mr. Stewart dwells on the money lost by my company in recent times but somehow does not provide his readers with any details about the fact that for the first eighteen years of my career every investor made good returns—often more than ninety times the original investment.

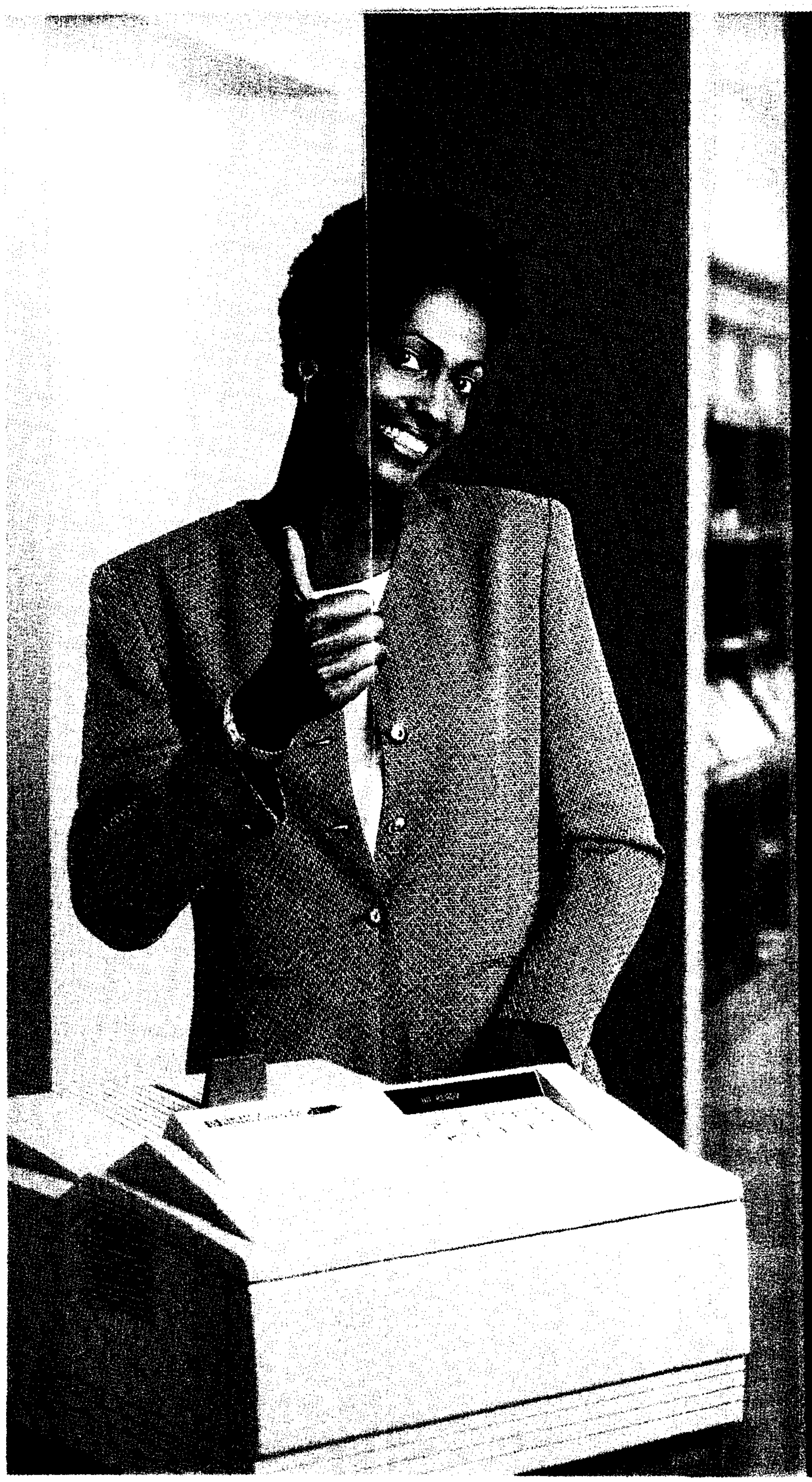
In an attempt to disparage my character, Mr. Stewart raises a complex, technical tax issue, but doesn't tell readers that in twenty-five years I had no involvement in my company's tax planning; I delegated it completely to competent professionals.

Finally, Mr. Stewart lets no good deed go unpunished. Each year, I pay full tuition for a hundred students at the University of Tennessee. He labors to turn even this into a negative. He reports that I provided real estate instead of cash to meet this year's commitment, failing to mention that my agreement with the university provides for exactly such an arrangement.

Since its founding, in 1970, my company has made important contributions in the fields of education and health. In the past three years, some new ventures did not succeed, which resulted in the sale of its key assets. I overextended our resources trying to do too much too fast. Those mistakes had to do with my own weaknesses and misjudgments but not with my character and integrity. People who have worked with me for many years know that this is true.

CHRIS WHITTLE
New York City

Because the Christopher Whittle article focussed on the financial chaos he has caused, it neglected to say much about the educational chaos he has caused with Channel One. Many academic opponents see Mr. Whittle as a smooth-



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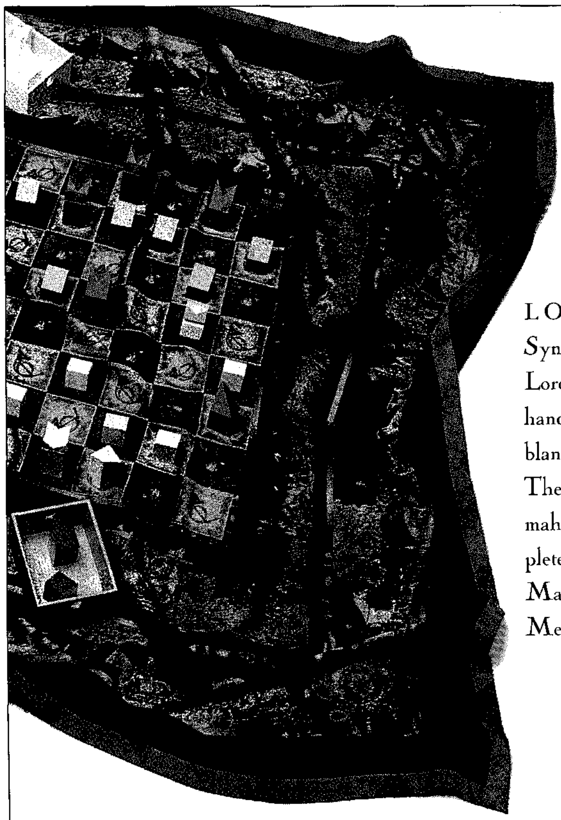

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talking con man responsible for an egregious intrusion of commercialism into the classroom. Channel One blurs the distinction between the "marketplace" and the schools. In a society that values free speech and free enterprise and diverse political and commercial persuaders, we must expect to live in an environment of many persuaders in competition. The schools, however, are the appropriate venue for neutrality and objectivity, the place to teach the young how to analyze and understand the techniques common to *all* persuaders.

Mr. Whittle's Channel One has suborned the schools, by using them to deliver an audience to a few persuaders (primarily selling candies, soft drinks, footwear, and cosmetics) whose messages are "approved" by the schools, with teachers acting as Mr. Whittle's in-house agents. Even though Mr. Whittle is leaving Channel One, Channel One is not leaving the schools.

HUGH RANK
Governors State University
University Park, Ill.

From its first, overblown descriptions, Chris Whittle's Edison Project has struck some of us interested in reforming American education as worse than out of touch with reality. James B. Stewart's account of Mr. Whittle's glamorous rise and descent helps explain why. Any profits to corporations investing in educational change will not be produced directly by the schools involved but will come later, with a more sensitive, literate, better-trained populace, which will ultimately contribute to society, and not drain public and private resources. Improving failing schools really isn't very difficult. Many of us know what to do and how to do it, but we lack the charisma and the money that give flimflam entrepreneurs like Mr. Whittle access to those with the power to invest in the necessary changes. One lesson to be learned: In seeking a savior for our schools, look first in the candidate's sock drawers. If they're lined with hand-tooled leather, find another candidate.

DOUG GIEBEL
Big Sandy, Mont.

Letters should be as brief as possible, and sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number to "In the Mail," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. They may be edited for length and clarity.

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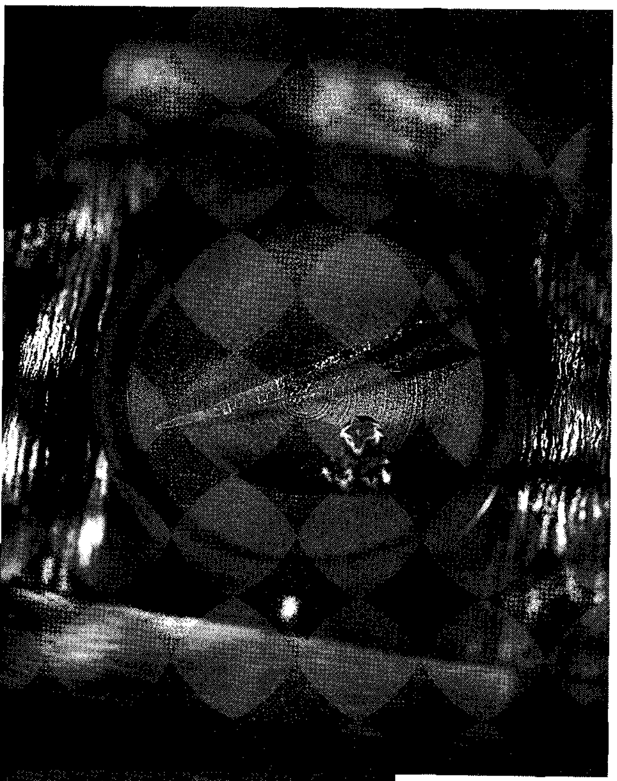

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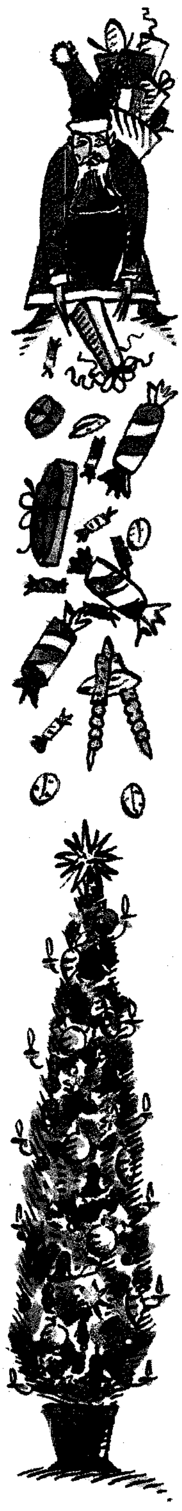


THE HOLIDAYS

Glitter Town

THE days of not being able to see the forest for the Christmas trees have arrived again. The giant tree has risen at Rockefeller Center; the thirty-two-foot Fifth Avenue menorah is being kindled; Cartier has gift-wrapped its shop; the Abigail Adams Smith Museum is lighting tapers for candlelight tours; and Brian Boitano is sharpening his skates for the "Nutcracker on Ice." Every taste, from buttoned-down to outré, has a constituency in the Big Apple, and nowhere is the city's extravagant diversity more apparent than in its hordes of seasonal delights. Supercrass consumerism sidles up beside dreidel-spinning tradition. Tiny Tim, the Dickens waif, has a busy schedule of appearances, at a staid library and at a huge arena; area pagans are marking the winter solstice; and a Kwanza marketplace at the American Museum of Natural History will feature dance and music performances. As Rosemary Clooney will surely sing when she takes the stage at Avery Fisher Hall, we're walking through a winter wonderland—so take advantage. The following listings should help you blaze a trail through the holiday forest.

SEASONAL SPECIALTIES

The Radio City Christmas Spectacular—Every imaginable bit of holiday madness, including Teddy bears dreaming of Tchaikovsky, a small herd of animals bringing the Nativity to life, Ebenezer Scrooge, and a faux Rockefeller Center tree and rink. Of course, the Rockettes cap the show. (Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. Through Jan. 8.)

"A Christmas Carol"—In multiple editions this season. On Broadway, Patrick Stewart reprises his 1991 and 1992 solo productions, taking on all thirty-nine parts. (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100. Dec. 19-Jan. 8.) . . . ¶ A musical version, with a score by Alan Menken, opens officially on Dec. 1 at 6:30. Walter Charles leads a ninety-member cast. (Paramount, Madison Square Garden. 307-7171. Through Jan. 1.) . . . ¶ Victorian carollers, conjurers, and jugglers are on hand as Gregg Whiteside, of the radio station WQXR, reads from Dickens' holiday classic at the Morgan Library. The hundred-and-fifty-one-year-old manuscript and two of the original watercolor illustrations will also be on view, through Jan. 8. (29 E. 36th St. 645-0008, ext. 347. Festivities on Dec. 4, from 3 to 6; reading at 4.) . . . ¶ Ancestral voices will echo as Catherine Dickens, the author's great-great-great-granddaughter, discusses the novel and the Charles Dickens Heritage Foundation. (Winter Garden, World Financial Center, Battery Park City. Dec. 17-18, from 1 to 4. No tickets necessary.)

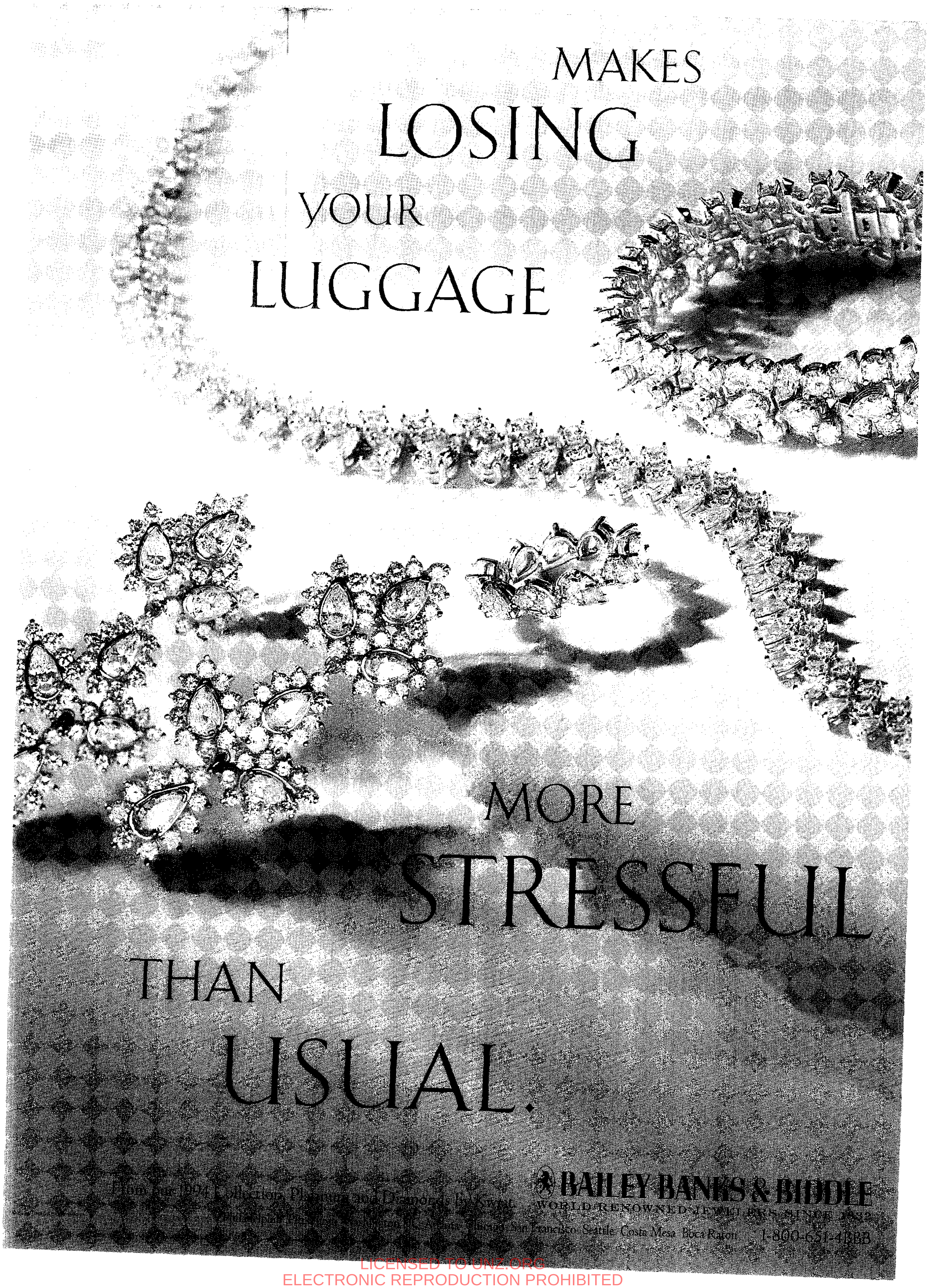
Paul Winter's "Solstice Live!"—This symbolic journey through the longest night of the year returns to the Cathedral of St. John the Divine for its fifteenth incarnation, with new music, five percussionists, a dozen dancers, and the gospel singer Theresa Thomason. (Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. 662-2133. Dec. 15 at 8, Dec. 16 at 8:30, and Dec. 17 at 2 and 8.)

Menorah Lighting—Continuing each night through the end of Hanukkah on Dec. 4, another flame will be added to the thirty-two-foot-tall menorah, at Fifth Ave. and 59th St. On the final evening, at 5:30, when all of its oil lamps are ablaze, there will be singing, dancing, and free hot latkes (potato pancakes), the holiday's traditional treat. (For more information, call 1-718 778-6000.)

"A Tuna Christmas"—Broadway's sequel to the 1982 comedy "Greater Tuna," in which the original cast members, Joe Sears and Jaston Williams, portray all twenty-four citizens of Texas's third-smallest town on the day before Christmas. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200. In previews from Dec. 8. Opens Dec. 15 at 6:45.)

Trees—At eighty feet, the Norway spruce in Rockefeller Center may be five feet shorter than last year's tree, but that doesn't mean its lighting will be any less of an event. Christopher Reeve hosts. Maureen McGovern, the Manhattan Transfer, and the Times Square Church Choir will lend harmony to the spectacle. (Fifth Ave. at 50th St. Dec. 2 at 5:30.) . . . ¶ A twenty-foot blue spruce decorated with angels and cherubs shares the floor with eighteenth-century Neapolitan crèche figures at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, starting Dec. 1. (Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. Through Jan. 8.) . . . ¶ The St. Cecilia Chorus makes up a singing Christmas tree at the South Street Seaport. (East River at Fulton St. Thursdays and Fridays at 6:30 and 7:30, and Saturdays and Sundays at 3 and 4. Through Jan. 1.) . . . ¶ Origami models of items from the American Museum of Natural History's collection decorate its fifteen-foot tree. (Central Park W. at 79th St. Through Jan. 15.) . . . ¶ Big Bird and Sheldon Turnipseed, from the PBS children's

EMMANUEL PIERRE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THE HOLIDAYS–Cont'd

mystery "Ghostwriter," will co-host the lighting of the Lincoln Center holiday tree. They'll be backed by the Canadian Brass and a chorus of more than a hundred kids. On top of all that, Tony Randall will read "A Visit from St. Nicholas." (Fountain Plaza. Dec. 5 at 6:30.)

"La Cantata dei Pastori"—A seventeenth-century Neapolitan comedy in which the Devil waylays Mary and Joseph on the road to Bethlehem. Performed in Italian, with English narration, by I Giullari di Piazza, a New York-based troupe of singers, dancers, and actors. (Synod House, Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 110th St. 924-0077. Dec. 9-10 at 8 and Dec. 11 at 3.)

Alter-Nativity—Biblical stories meet circus acts in the Vermont-based Bread and Puppet Theatre's politically oriented Nativity play, based upon "The Death of King Herod," a Russian folk drama. (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., at 10th St. 254-1109. Dec. 20-23 at 7 and 9. Some performances are in Spanish.)

Kwanza—A traditional African marketplace, with music and dance performances, will rise at the American Museum of Natural History to celebrate Kwanza, which, in Swahili, means "the first fruits of the harvest." (Central Park W. at 79th St. 769-5315. Dec. 28, starting at noon.) . . . ¶ For those who want to use their hands, workshops to make gifts for Kwanza and Three Kings' Day will be held at the Bronx Museum of the Arts, with a concert by Los Pleneros de la 21. (1040 Grand Concourse. 1-718 681-6000, ext. 41. Dec. 28 from 1 to 4.)

"Star of Christmas"—A celestial show about the views of historians, theologians, linguists, and astronomers on a thousand-year-old story, the journey of the Three Wise Men. (Hayden Planetarium, Central Park W. at 79th St. 769-5100. Through Jan. 2.)

House Tours—Some of the oldest homes in the region open their doors during this season for peripatetic celebrations by candlelight. At the eighteenth-century Abigail Adams Smith Museum, the period before Christmas trees became popular will be illuminated on Dec. 9-10. With musical accompaniment on Friday evening by Cecilia Gniewek Brauer, performing on the glass armonica, an instrument invented by Benjamin Franklin, and on Saturday evening by Keith Goodman on the concert harp. (421 E. 61st St. 838-6878. Tours from 5:30 to 8:30.) . . . ¶ Three historic houses in Queens—the Kingsland Homestead, the Bowne House, and the Friends Meeting House—are on an afternoon's path to celebration. (Queens Historical Society. Dec. 11 from 1 to 4. For more information, call 1-718 939-0647.)

MUSIC AND DANCE

Handel's "Messiah"—During this season, there's one for every taste. Here are our top picks. Dec. 6-7 at 8: Kent Tritle directs the Choir and Orchestra of St. Ignatius Loyola. (Park Ave. at 84th St. 288-2520.) . . . ¶ Dec. 12 at 7:30: The Handel and Haydn Society of Boston (a period-instrument orchestra with chorus), directed by William Christie. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030.) . . . ¶ Dec. 20-21 at 8: The National Choral Council's twenty-seventh annual "Messiah" sing-in, with twenty-four conductors taking turns on the podium, and a chorus of nearly three thousand, including you. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030.)

"The Nutcracker"—First performed in 1954, George Balanchine's interpretation of Tchaikovsky's classic ballet has become a holiday tradition for many New York families. Kids enjoy New York City Ballet's dancing mice and the unforgettable sight of the forty-foot-tall Christmas tree rising magically out of the stage; parents may tune in to more sinister undercurrents. Tickets are notoriously scarce, so don't delay if you have designs on this "Nutcracker," which will run through Dec. 31. (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

"Nutcracker on Ice"—The ballet adapted to the rink for a cast that includes Olympic gold medalists Oksana Baiul, Brian Boitano, and Viktor Petrenko. (Nassau Coliseum. 1-516 794-9300. Dec. 28 at 7:30.)

"Amahl and the Night Visitors"—The Little Orchestra Society's version of Gian Carlo Menotti's one-act opera, conducted by Dino Anagnost. The cast includes Matt Butler in the title role and Susan Shafer as Amahl's mama. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Dec. 3 at 11, 1, and 3.) . . . ¶ Il Piccolo Teatro dell'Opera's production, with Paul Gelinas and Nan Hughes in the leading roles and Anton Coppola conducting. Dancers from the School of Ballet Hispanico are part of the company, too. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Dec. 14-16 at 10:30 A.M. and noon, and Dec. 17-18 at 1 and 3.)

Lavender Light—The Black and People of All Colors Lesbian and Gay Gospel Choir in "Jubilation: A Holiday Concert." (Tribeca Performing Arts Center, 199 Chambers St. 346-8510. Dec. 3 at 8.)

The Jazz Nativity—For its tenth anniversary, this syncopated pageant arrives at Lincoln Center. All the roles, from the shepherd to the Three Kings, are played by jazz greats, including Lionel Hampton, Tito Puente, and Dave Brubeck. They are backed by an all-star jazz orchestra and choir. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Dec. 4 at 7 and Dec. 5 at 8.)

The Colors of Christmas—Peabo Bryson, Sheena Easton, Roberta Flack, and James Ingram, in concert with a gospel choir. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Dec. 6 at 8.)

The Tallis Scholars—The delicately balanced English chamber singers offer two separate programs of Renaissance music of the season. In the first you get ambience; in the second, comortable seats. (Church of the Blessed Sacrament, 152 W. 71st St. Dec. 7 at 8. For information about tickets, call 666-9266. . . . ¶ Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Dec. 8 at 8.)

"The Star of Bethlehem"—A long-forgotten oratorio by Joseph Rheinberger, a contemporary of Brahms, performed in a candlelit concert by the Little Orchestra Society and the Metropolitan Singers/The Greek Choral Society. Dino Anagnost conducts. (Holy Trinity Cathedral, 319 E. 74th St. 704-2100. Dec. 10 at 7.)

Vienna Choir Boys—For those with a yen for Christmas sweets. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Dec. 11 at 7:30.)

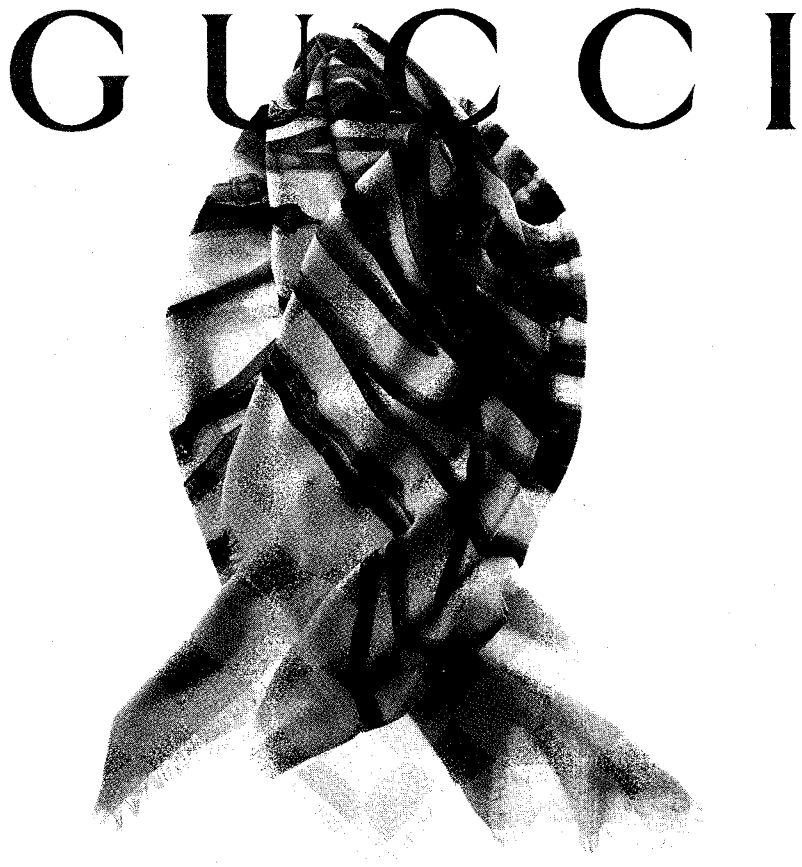
Rosemary Clooney's White Christmas Party—One of the first ladies of cabaret returns to town, accompanied by her daughter-in-law Debby Boone and other family members. The concert features clips of the 1954 movie "White Christmas," in which Miss Clooney co-starred. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Dec. 16 at 8 and Dec. 18 at 7.)

"Il Solazzo"—A fourteenth-century Italian Christmas entertainment, performed by the Newberry Consort. (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. Dec. 18 at 5.)

" 'Twas the Night. . . ."—F. Murray Abraham intones Clement Clarke Moore's beloved couplets against the backdrop of a new score by Raphael Mostel, as part of a seasonal concert by the Heliosphere chamber ensemble. (St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 346 W. 20th St. 691-6263. Dec. 18 at 7.)

Aulos Ensemble—Guests join the period-instrument chamber group in two pairs of seasonal concerts in a festive setting. Dec. 19 at 6:30 and 8:30: With the Riverside Choir, in a program that includes Britten's "A Ceremony of Carols." . . . ¶ Dec. 22 at 6:30 and 8:30: With soprano Julianne Baird and countertenor Drew Minter, in music by Purcell and Bach. (Medieval Sculpture Hall, Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949.)

The Canadian Brass—Those jocular fellows from up there, right next to the North Pole. (Medieval Sculpture Hall, Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. Dec. 21 at 6:30 and 8:30. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)



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THE THEATRE

Stocking Stuffers

IN her purring holiday classic "Santa Baby," Eartha Kitt starts her wish list by asking Santa to "slip a sable under the tree for me." This year, she could ask for tickets to "Show Boat" or "Sunset Boulevard." Both these new shows are sold out well into the new year; if your heart is set on a holiday performance and you don't have tickets already, your best bet is the cancellation lines that start queuing at the Gershwin ("Show Boat") and the Minskoff ("Sunset") around four every afternoon. The news is only slightly brighter for the most popular holdover musicals: "The Phantom of the Opera" has a few scattered seats for December performances, mostly in the rear mezzanine and mostly during the week; ditto "Beauty and the Beast," except that your chances of landing in the orchestra are a little better.

The TKTS discount booth in Times Square is worth checking out for "Kiss of the Spider Woman" and "Miss Saigon" tickets, although they turn up infrequently. "Damn Yankees" and "Tommy" turn up more often. Lucky thing, too, since the Yankee haters make up the kickiest chorus line in town, and The Who's music provides the surest sonic blastoff on Broadway. "Tommy" has a kids-friendly schedule to boot: two performances on both Saturday and Sunday. The moody revival of "Carousel," at Lincoln Center, has much to offer both children *and* adults. It closes on January 15, which means that tickets are like hen's teeth, but this production is so enjoyable that it's worth selling your sable to procure them.

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

HAPGOOD—Stockard Channing heads up a British intelligence agency in the New York première of this 1988 play by Tom Stoppard. Previews through Dec. 3. Opens Dec. 4 at 7. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

THE PETRIFIED PRINCE—A new musical based on a screenplay by Ingmar Bergman and directed by Harold Prince. The score and lyrics are by Michael John LaChiusa, and the book is by Edward Gallardo. Previews begin Dec. 6. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

SLAVS! THINKING ABOUT THE LONGSTANDING PROBLEMS OF VIRTUE AND HAPPINESS—A satirical new play by Tony Kushner. Mary Shultz, Marisa Tomei, and Joseph Wiseman are in the cast. Previews through Dec. 5. Opens Dec. 6 at 8. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 302-6989.)

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE?—A comedy by Donald Margulies about an odd Brooklyn family, with Faith Prince, Alan Rosenberg, Jerry Stiller, and Florence Stanley. Joe Mantello is the director. In previews. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

ZOOMAN AND THE SIGN—A revival of a 1980 play by Charles Fuller about a murder in an inner-city neighborhood. Larry Gilliard, Jr., has the title role. In previews. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103.)

OPENED RECENTLY

ANATOMY OF SOUND—The Willow Cabin Theatre Company presents an evening of six staged radio plays from the forties by Norman Corwin. (INTAR, 420 W. 42nd St. Closes Dec. 4. For information about tickets, call 886-1889.)

AS YOU LIKE IT—A return engagement of Cheek by Jowl's all-male production of Shakespeare's play runs Dec. 6-10. (BAM's Majestic Theatre, 651 Fulton St. 1-718 636-4100.)

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST—Disney's Broadway money-spinner, adapted from the animated-film version, has a few moments of solid-gold theatrical amazement: the showstopping "Be Our Guest" production number and the Beast's transformation into the Prince. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/2/94.) (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100.)

THE BEAUX' STRATAGEM—George Farquhar's late Restoration comedy, about two well-bred intriguers out to swindle naïve country folk. The Pearl Theatre Company's presentation, directed by Mary Lou Rosato, is held back by a few uneven performances, so it only partly mines the play's abundant cleverness. (Theatre 80, at 80 St. Marks Pl. 598-9802. Closes Dec. 10.)

A CHEEVER EVENING—A. R. Gurney's new play, based on eighteen stories by John Cheever, is Cheeveresque in name only, a skin-deep, almost sitcom-like gloss on the writer's disquieting work. The only authentic thing about the evening is the talent of the six delicious actors in the cast. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

COMMEDIA TONITE!—A production by the Lark Theatre Company that combines a seventeenth-century Italian play ("The Three Cuckolds") with several American works from the nineteen-twenties and thirties. (Samuel Beckett, 412 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

DAS BARBECÜ—A musical comedy inspired by Wagner's "Ring" cycle and set in Texas. The book and lyrics are by Jim Luigs and the score is by Scott Warrender. Christopher Ashley is the director. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave. 307-4100.)

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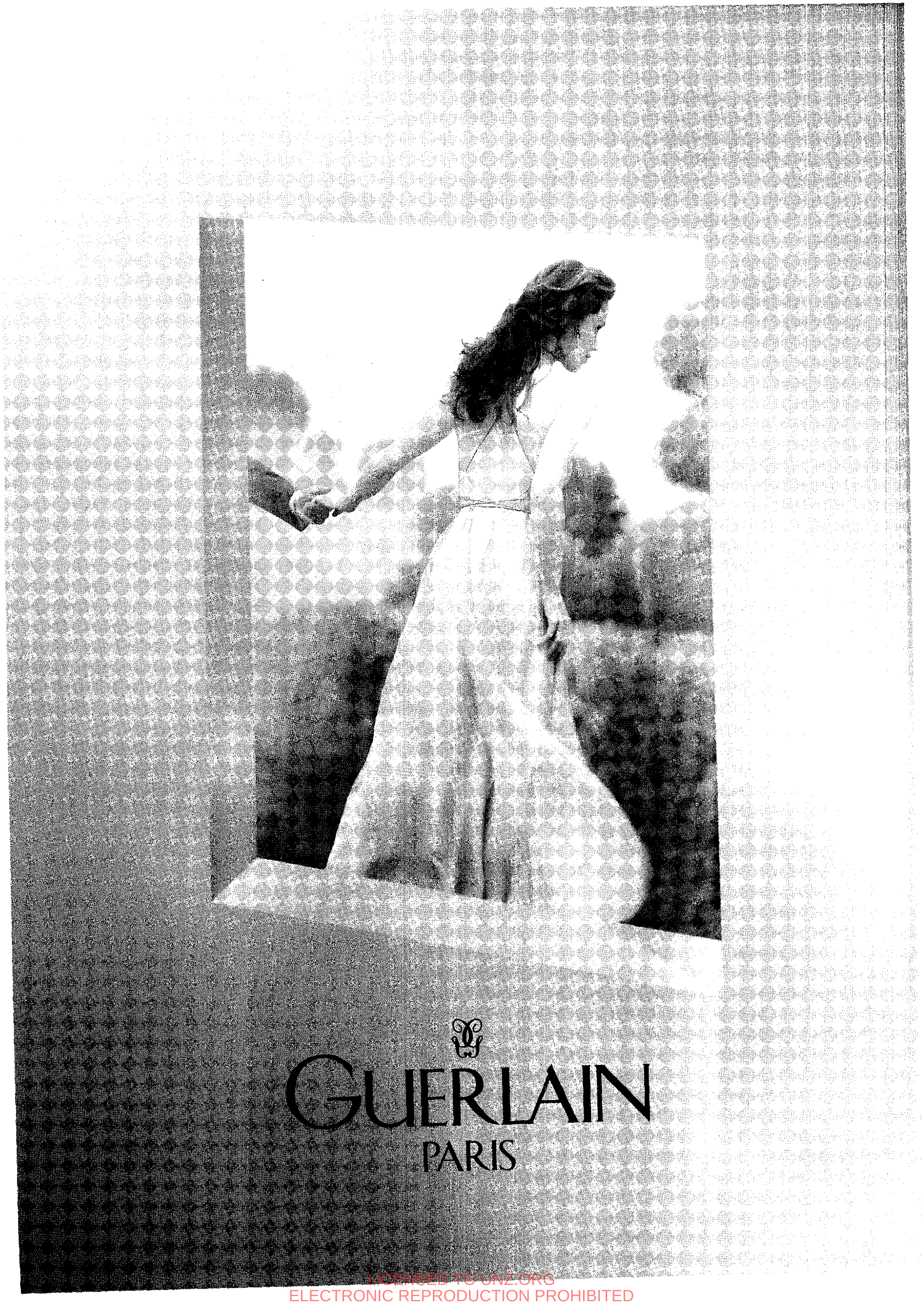
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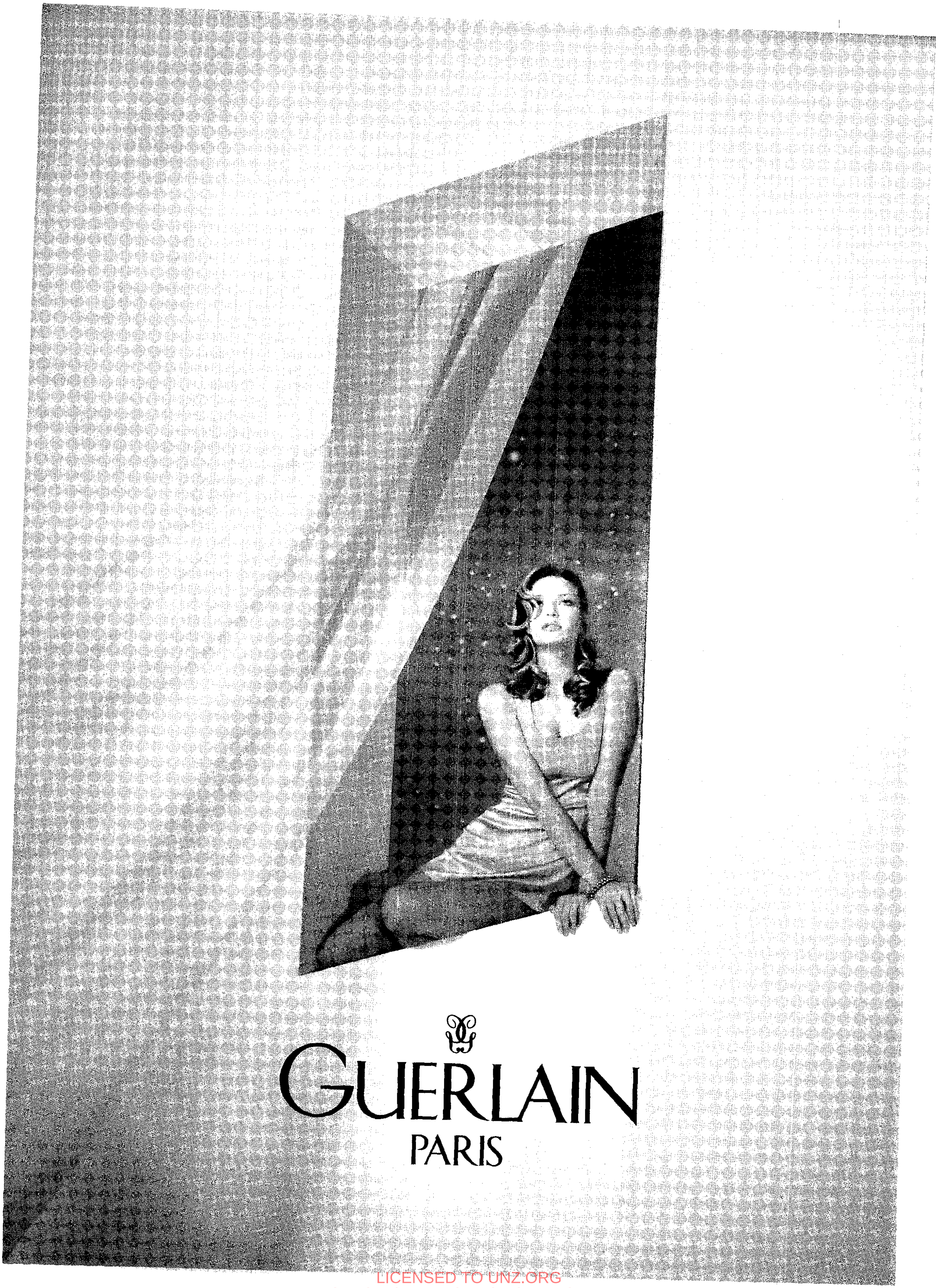
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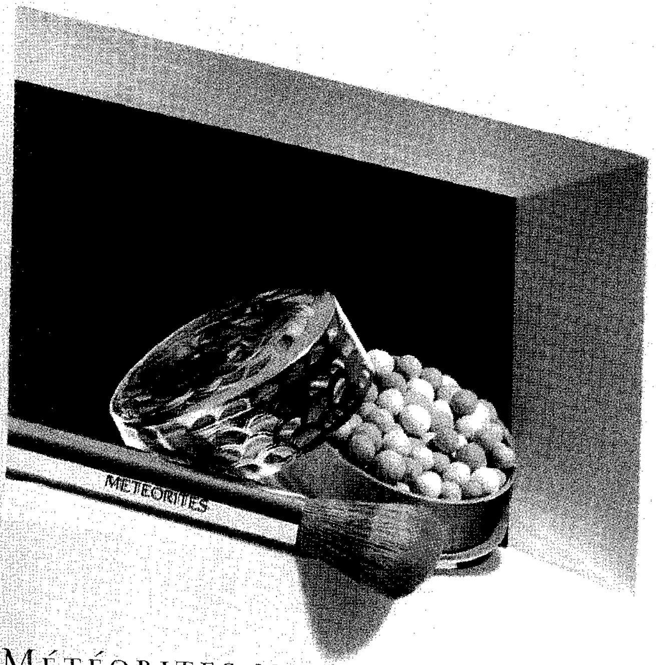

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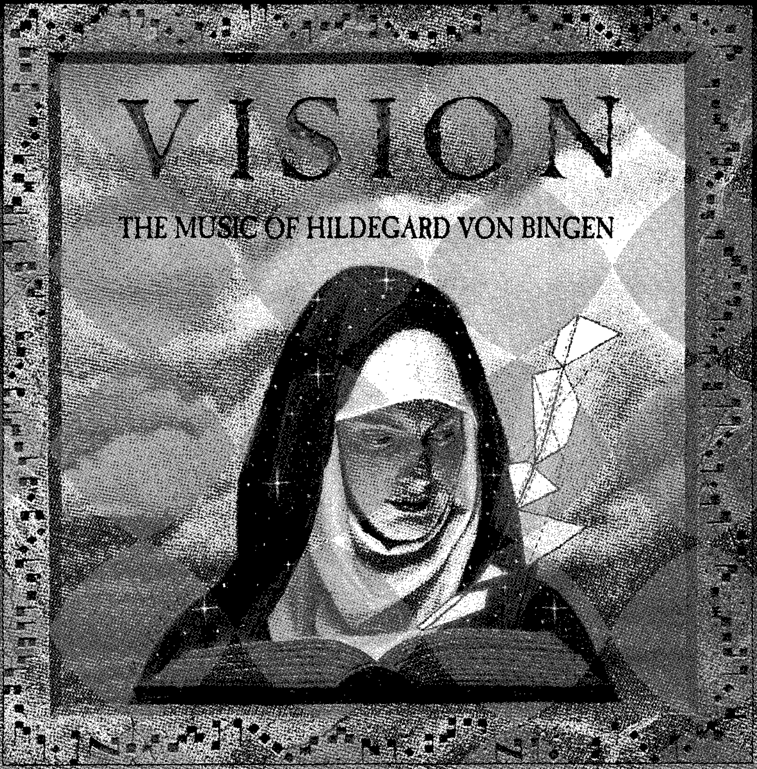
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THE THEATRE—Cont'd

The Diva Is Dismissed—Jenifer Lewis has a good voice, good looks, and good comic timing in her one-woman show. Billed as "the queen of camp," she isn't quite as outrageous as the title suggests. Less humility would deliver more glee. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Closes Dec. 11.)

Durang Durang—Christopher Durang's new collection of six short plays has an impish, everybody-into-the-pool spirit about it; among those who get soaked are Sam Shepard (in a wicked sendup called "A Stye of the Eye") and the tough-talking David Mamet. The highlight is a hilarious parody of "The Glass Menagerie," in which Durang pays homage to the raw, tender feelings of Williams' characters by riding roughshod over them. The cast includes Keith Reddin, Lizbeth Mackay, and Patricia Elliott, who sets the tone for the evening by delivering a bumptiously Benchleyesque monologue about "the theatre." Walter Bobbie directed. (11/28/94) (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

The Flying Karamazov Brothers Do the Impossible!—Just in from London's Criterion Theatre, the juggling comedians have brought their new show to Broadway. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 307-4100.)

Girl Gone—A suspense drama by Jacquelyn Reingold, in which a topless dancer searches for the killer of her best friend. (Manhattan Class Company, 120 W. 28th St. 727-7765. Closes Dec. 8.)

The Glass Menagerie—Tennessee Williams' most transparently autobiographical play, in a fascinating production directed by Frank Galati. Julie Harris, as the rueful and desperate Amanda Wingfield, does a superb job of letting the play speak quietly through her character. Calista Flockhart brings an affecting delicacy to the role of Laura; the droll and dreamy Željko Ivanek plays Tom; and Kevin Kilner is the gentleman caller. (11/21/94) (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

Grease!—The talented cast and the inventive production team show off the gleeful phonyness of Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey's musical with unembarrassed affection, and the result is a fun fake that's not trying to pass as the real thing. With Brooke Shields as Rizzo. (5/30/94) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

Hey Buddy—A play by Bryan Goluboff, with Mark Auerbach as a Jewish kid seeking revenge after being beaten by a gang. (American Jewish Theatre, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797. Closes Dec. 4.)

Inside Out—A six-woman musical extolling the benefits of group therapy; the actors do more with their roles than you'd expect, and their voices are strong. Henry Fonte's direction is sometimes heavy-handed, but Gary Slavin's choreography enriches every song. (Cherry Lane Theatre, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020.)

An Inspector Calls—J. B. Priestley's 1945 mystery is not really a play—it's a speech, about every man's link to every other man. The fine cast, which includes Kenneth Cranham and Jane Adams, has ideas, not actions, to play. Directed by Stephen Daldry. (5/16/94) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Irish Repertory Theatre—Presenting two lively and literate shows in repertory: "Mother of All the Behans," with Rosaleen Linehan, and "Alive, Alive Oh!," with Milo O'Shea and Kitty Sullivan. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200. Both close Dec. 4.)

Jackie Mason: Politically Incorrect—A former rabbi from a family of rabbis, Mason uses the stage as his bully pulpit. Behind his shtick, which is sometimes vulgar but always funny, is a fundamentalist disgust at the world's fraud, wickedness, hypocrisy, and inhumanity. (4/25/94) (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

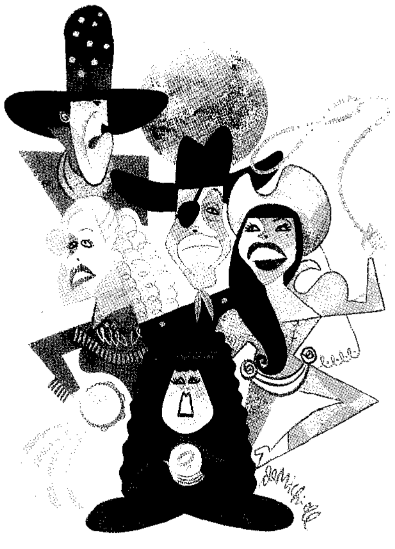
Jean Cocteau Repertory—"The Cherry Orchard," by Anton Chekhov, runs in repertory with a modern-dress version of William Wycherley's Restoration comedy "The

Country Wife," in which the subtle art of making cuckolds is conveyed all too often with a lascivious pelvic thrust. (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

Killer Joe—A black comedy, set in a Texas trailer park, about a son who plots to kill his mother for the insurance money. With David Mogentale and Danna Lyons. Written by Tracy Letts. (29th Street Repertory Theatre, 212 W. 29th St. 465-0575.)

Love! Valour! Compassion!—The eight gay men in Terrence McNally's beautifully written new drama connect in ways that almost any nuclear family would envy. Under the nimble direction of Joe Mantello, seven actors (including Stephen Spinella, Stephen Bogardus, John Glover—doing double duty as identical twins—and the wonderful Nathan Lane) present humbling evidence of what love is and can be. (11/14/94) (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

A Midsummer Night's Dream—Put the Ridiculous Theatrical Company and Shakespeare's comedy together and you get ridiculousness of a very high order indeed. Under the direction of Everett Quinton (who plays Bottom and Pyramus), the large cast, featuring many veteran Ridiculi and a few newcomers, puts on a well-paced and spirited performance. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, 1 Sheridan Sq. 691-2271. Closes Dec. 18.)



"Das Barbecü," at the Minetta Lane Theatre.

Night Seasons—Horton Foote is a master at enclosing tragedies in small, ordinary events. In this play, which he also directed, he recounts forty-six years in the fractious history of a prosperous Texas family, focussing on how the clan's matriarch (Jean Stapleton) defers the dreams of her never married daughter (Hallie Foote), not out of ill will but, more poignantly, through complacent neglect. (Kampo Cultural Center, 31 Bond St. 279-4200. Closes Dec. 4.)

Nunsense 2: The Sequel—The second coming of writer-director Dan Goggin's hit. Five talented actresses take the veil and perform a revue to raise money for their convent. There's dancing, singing, boozing, and bingo, but none of it saves the show from the clutches of cliché. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.)

Passion—Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine's listless epistolary musical, in which the main characters spend much of their time singing love letters to and from each other. Jere Shea and Marin Mazzie are in fine voice as a dashing soldier and his lover, and Donna Murphy gives a stunning performance as Fosca, the predatory heroine. Lapine, who wrote the libretto, directed. (5/23/94) (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Public Enemy—Kenneth Branagh's play is not much more than a moody knockabout, but it does offer an enticing conceit: a Belfast boy (Paul Ronan) works the night-club circuit as a Jimmy Cagney impersonator until the Troubles turn his gangster fantasies into real-life drama. (Irish Arts Center, 553 W. 51st St. 757-3318.)

The Shadow Box—A revival of Michael Cristofer's 1977 play, with Mary Alice, Estelle Parsons, Mercedes Ruehl, and Marlo Thomas. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

Show Boat—Harold Prince's bighearted production of the 1927 Jerome Kern-Oscar Hammerstein II musical is epic-size, full of life and full of vision. With John McMartin and Elaine Stritch as the patriarch and the matriarch of the floating theatre, and Lonette McKee, whose moving rendition of "Bill" is the show's most intimate moment. (10/17/94) (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

ROBERT DEMICHELL

Simpatico—A new play by Sam Shepard, with Beverly D'Angelo, Marcia Gay Harden, Ed Harris, James Gammon, and Welker White. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Closes Dec. 18.)

Some People—Danny Hoch's one-man show features thirteen New York characters. Jo Bonney directed. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Closes Dec. 11.)

Sunset Boulevard—Glenn Close stars as Norma Desmond in Andrew Lloyd Webber's new musical, based on the 1950 movie and directed by Trevor Nunn. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4007.)

That's Life!—A serio-comic revue about the variety of Jewish life in America. Thirteen composers and lyricists collaborated on the twenty musical numbers. The choreography and direction are by Helen Butleroff. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.)

3 Postcards—Craig Lucas and Craig Carnelia have reworked their 1987 musical, which explores the friendship of three women (Johanna Day, Amy Kowallis, and Amanda Naughton) as they go from childhood through adulthood. Watching it is like reëxperiencing the bewilderment of growing up—you wonder what it's all about and when it will be over. David Pittu takes the men's roles, and Steve Freeman provides piano accompaniment. (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 239-6200. Closes Dec. 18.)

Three Tall Women—A moving, poetic play by Edward Albee, which is dominated by the huge, heroic performance of Myra Carter. Jordan Baker and the droll and delightful Marian Seldes are also in the cast. (5/16/94) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

Uncommon Women and Others—In Wendy Wasserstein's 1977 paean to Seven Sisterhood, five Mount Holyoke alumnae get together a few years after graduation and compare notes on the ways in which they and the world have and have not lived up to their expectations. Carole Rothman's production goes for maximum laughs and minimum emotional impact. The cast includes Mary McCann and Haviland Morris. (11/14/94) (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

Vita & Virginia—Vanessa Redgrave and Eileen Atkins star in this play that Ms. Atkins adapted from the letters of Vita Sackville-West and Virginia Woolf. Zoe Caldwell is the director. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 307-4100.)

LONG RUNS

ALL IN THE TIMING: John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. . . . **ANGELS IN AMERICA:** "Millennium Approaches" and "Perestroika." (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200. Closes Dec. 4.) . . . **BLOOD BROTHERS:** Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CAROUSEL:** Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CRAZY FOR YOU:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **DAMN YANKEES:** Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100. . . . **FAMILY SECRETS:** Westside Theatre, 407 W.

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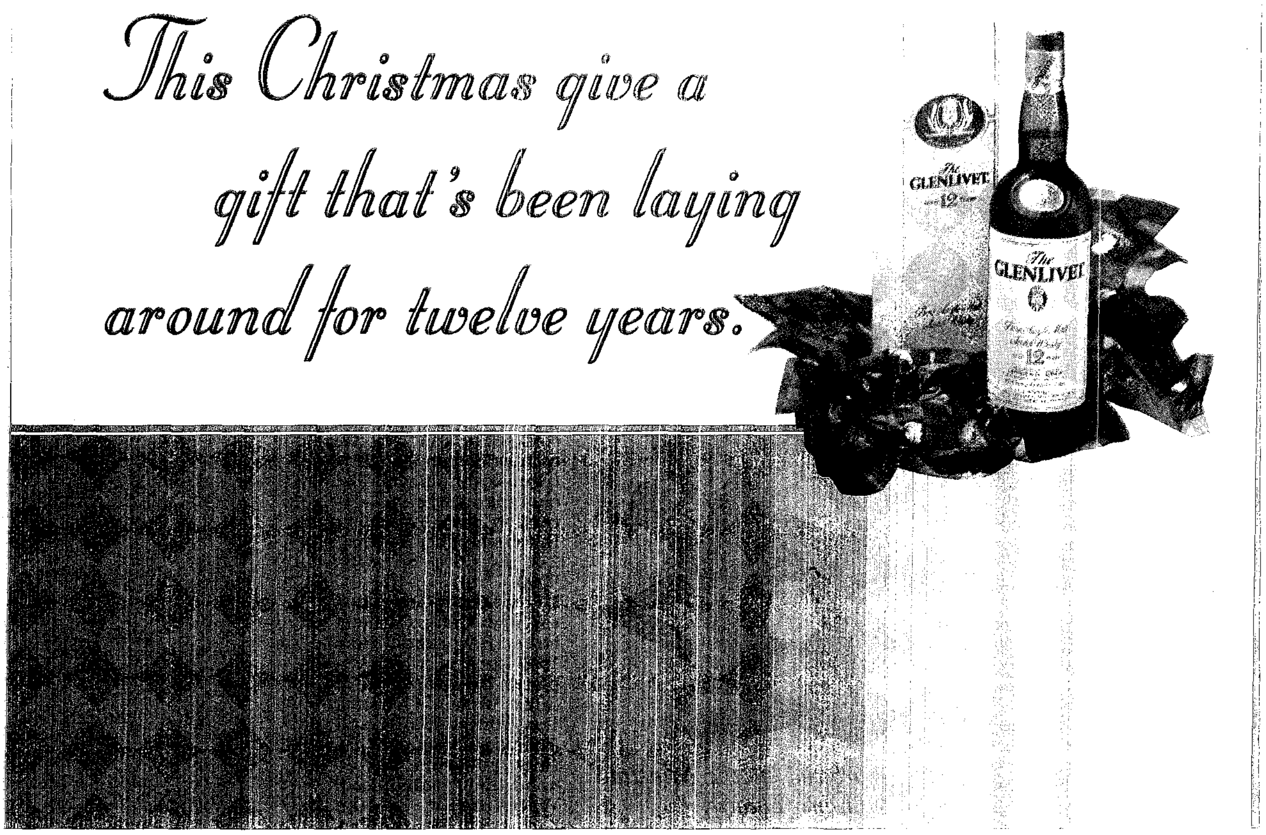
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12

THE THEATRE–Cont'd

43rd St. 307-4100. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **GUYS AND DOLLS:** Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **KISS OF THE SPIDER WOMAN:** Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200. . . . **THE WHO'S TOMMY:** St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

DANCE

BALLET HISPANICO—Nov. 30-Dec. 1 at 8: "¡Sí, Señor! ¡Es Mi Son!," "Good Night Paradise," and "El Baquiné." . . . ¶ Dec. 2-3 and Dec. 6 at 8, and Dec. 4 at 2 and 7:30: "El Baquiné," "Two by an Error," "Solo," and "¡Sí, Señor! ¡Es Mi Son!" . . . ¶ Dec. 3 at 2: "Two by an Error," "Solo," and "¡Sí, Señor! ¡Es Mi Son!" (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Through Dec. 11.)

BILL T. JONES / ARNIE ZANE DANCE COMPANY—In the New York première of "Still/Here," an evening-length work, with folksinger Odetta and guitarist Vernon Reid. Part of the Next Wave Festival. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. Nov. 30 at 7 and Dec. 1-3 at 8.)

BEBE MILLER COMPANY—On the bill: "Heaven and Earth" (New York première), "Tiny Sisters," and "Cantos Gordos." (Playhouse 91, 316 E. 91st St. Nov. 30-Dec. 1 and Dec. 3 at 8, and Dec. 4 at 3 and 8. For information about tickets, call 996-1100.)

"IMPROVISATION FESTIVAL / NY"—Dec. 3 at 8: Chris Aiken, Julie Carr, Jess Curtis, and others. (Dia Center for the Arts, 155 Mercer St.). . . ¶ Dec. 4 at 3: Ron Brown, Sondra Loring, Lisa Race, and Group 6. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St.) . . . ¶ Dec. 4 at 8: Steve Krieckhaus, Danny Lepkoff, and others. (Dia Center for the Arts.) . . . ¶ Dec. 5 at 8: Karen Nelson, Mark Tompkins, and others. (Judson Memorial Church, 55 Washington Sq. S.) . . . ¶ Dec. 6 at 8: Alexis Eupierre and Audrey Kindred. (Judson Memorial Church.) (For reservations for all events, call 477-6854. Through Dec. 11.)

DAVID ZAMBRANO—The Venezuelan-born performer presents "Dance Is a Fat Woman," which features an all-male cast of dancers and musicians. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. Dec. 1-4 at 8:30.)

STEFA ZAWERUCHA—Appearing with four other dancers in "Curve Ahead," a collaboration with the composer (Blue) Gene Tyranny. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Dec. 1-3 at 8 and Dec. 4 at 3.)

NATIONAL DANCE THEATRE COMPANY OF JAMAICA—The troupe offers two New York premières, "Ancestral Echoes" and "Interconnexions." (Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts, Brooklyn College. 1-718 951-4500. Dec. 3 at 8 and Dec. 4 at 2.)

ASIAN CONTEMPORARY DANCE FESTIVAL—Nov. 30: Yung Yung Tsuai Dance Company, Dappin' Butoh of Seattle, and Michael Mao Dance. . . . ¶ Dec. 1-2: Dana Tai Soon-Burgess's Moving Forward Dance Company, Uttara Coorlawala, and Moving Earth, Orient Sphere. . . . ¶ Dec. 3-4: Balinese American Fusion Dance, Wei Mei Yeung & Company, and Jeong-Ho Nam's Zoom Dance Group. (La Mama Annex, 66 E. 4th St. 475-7710. Performances at 7:30.)

NIGHT LIFE

Dave Marches On

DAVE BRUBECK, now seventy-four, is a styleless pianist who has made a kind of anti-style out of emotion. The strength of that emotion helped catapult his longtime alto saxophonist, the witty, diaphanous Paul Desmond, into his often beautiful melodic trajectories; without Brubeck, Desmond might simply have evanesced. Classically trained, Brubeck loved (and loves) polytonality and counterpoint, while Desmond used his delicate-new-leaf tone to polish Benny Carter and Lester Young to a lyric gleam. Brubeck thundered and Desmond sang; Brubeck sank into rhythmic whirlpools and Desmond floated above and told musical jokes. But when the brilliant, subtle, irrepressible Joe Morello joined the quartet on drums in 1958, he lifted Brubeck up in one hand and Desmond, who professed to hate drummers, in the other, and he made the group coalesce and swing. (The bassist Gene Wright completed the quartet.) Desmond, tired of travel, quit the quartet in 1967 and became a New York boulevardier. (He died ten years later.) Brubeck has never quite recovered. Still, he works on and on. He has released a new solo piano album—his first in almost forty years—called "Just You, Just Me"; always gracious, he nods throughout to Ellis Larkins and Milt Buckner, to Bach and Erroll Garner, and even to his old teacher Darius Milhaud. And he'll be appearing this week—with still another quartet—at the Blue Note, from November 29 to December 4.

CONCERTS

Green Day—These rambunctious youngsters from Berkeley specialize in high-velocity steamroller punk with a capital "P." There's not much here in the way of thought (most of the lyrics deal with silly, angst-ridden sentiments like "I found out what it takes to be a man / but Mom and Dad will never understand. . ."). But live, the band has an undeniable comic intensity and a terrific ability to incite mayhem. At the recent Woodstock festival, during a mud fight encouraged by the band, drummer Tre Cool lost a tooth and claimed to have *liked* it. With Pansy Division and Die Toten Hosen. (Nassau Coliseum. 1-516 794-9300. Dec. 2 at 8.)

Joshua Redman—The recording industry is behind Redman in a big way, but the critical jury on this young tenor saxophonist is still out. He is bursting with energy and talent, but his material isn't adding up yet. So maybe he's capable of playing anything and invoking everyone; the nagging question remains: who is he? Featured guests include the great saxophonist Joe Lovano and the wiry trumpeter Roy Hargrove. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Dec. 2 at 8.)

World Saxophone Quartet—Four horns, no rhythm section—the novelty of the W.S.Q. may have diminished, but after all this time, the group is still enthralling. Though the second-alto position (currently held by Eric Person) has been a revolving door for the past few years, the mighty core of this self-contained unit—tenorist David Murray, baritonist Hamiet Bluiett, and altoist Oliver Lake—is still standing firm, as are the sumptuous arrangements and alternately plush and cacophonous textures. With the singer Fontella Bass. (St. Ann's, 157 Montague St., Brooklyn. 1-718 858-2424. Dec. 3 at 8.)

The World Saxophone Quartet and Fontella Bass at St. Ann's.

KAREN CALDICOTT

Alison Krauss & Union Station / The Cox Family—Earlier this year, Krauss made an album with the Cox Family, a Louisiana-based gospel quintet, and the result was sweet heartland harmony—a high, unlonesome sound familiar to fans of her recordings with Union Station, her own bluegrass band. She can be uneven in live performance, but her voice is one of the great pleasures of the nineties, and she's worth seeking out. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Dec. 5 at 8.)

Ondekoza—The Japanese drumming ensemble, also known for their marathon running, in a concert of traditional Japanese music. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Nov. 30 at 8.)

Carnegie Hall Jazz Band—Playing works by Toshiko Akiyoshi, Carla Bley, Melba Liston, Maria Schneider, and Mary Lou Williams. Ms. Akiyoshi and Ms. Schneider will conduct their own compositions. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Dec. 1 at 8.)

Mor Thiam—The Senegalese drummer with his ensemble, Drums of Fire. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Dec. 2 at 8.)

Judy Collins—Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Dec. 2-3 at 8.

Manhattan Transfer—Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Dec. 2 at 8:30.

"Z-100 Acoustic Christmas"—With Weezer, Toad the Wet Sprocket, Indigo Girls, Hole, Green Day, Sheryl Crow, and Bon Jovi. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6500. Dec. 5 at 7.)

CLUBS

A.K.A., 77 W. Houston St., at Wooster St. (673-7325)—Hip-hop, jazz, and world beat meet in this small, velvet-draped club. Dec. 2: The **FUNKY POETS.** Dec. 3: The **SCREAMING HEADLESS TORSOS.**

Blarney Star, 43 Murray St. (732-2873)—Home to fine Irish music every Friday night. On Dec. 2: a night of button accordian, piano, and fiddle with **MARTIN CONNOLLY, MAUREEN CONNOLLY,** and **ANDY MC GANN.**

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Decent sight lines, great greasy food, prodigiously talented waitresses, and a consistent roster of high-quality acts. Somewhere on the spectrum between Michael Hedges and John Fahey, the English acoustic guitarist **ADRIAN LEGG,** in on Nov. 30, is a brilliant player whose sensitivity and tone are as astounding as his vast technical skills. Bassist and professional collaborator **ROB WASSERMAN,** who drops by on Dec. 2, has dedicated the past six years to enhancing the sex appeal of an instrument traditionally relegated to a supporting role. This year, he released "Trios," which featured inspired work by Elvis Costello, Neil Young,

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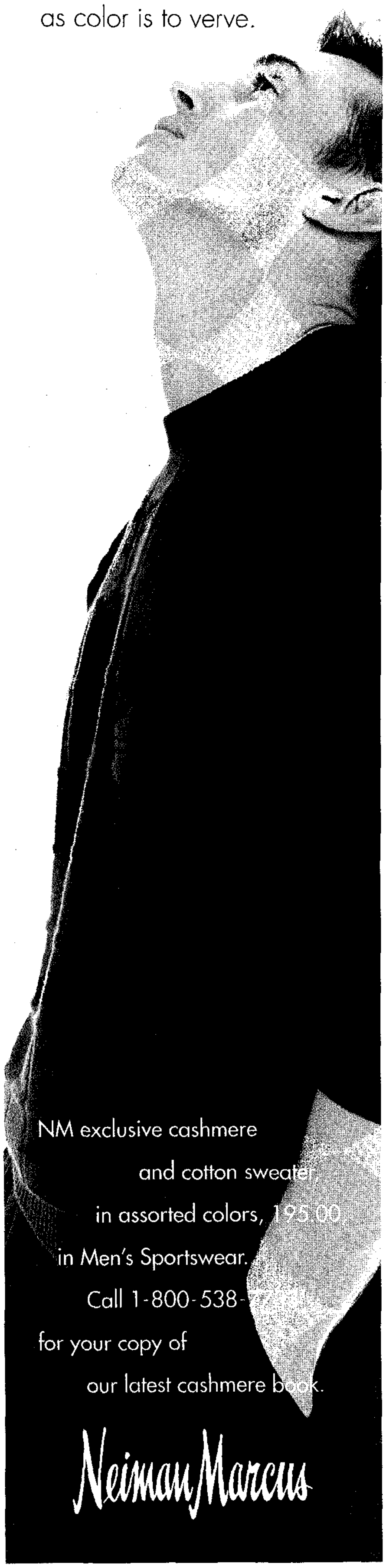
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NIGHT LIFE–Cont'd

and the dad-and-daughter team of Brian and Carnie Wilson. Joining Wasserman on vocals and guitar will be **JOHN WESLEY HARDING,** a Costello manqué best known for his modelling layout in *Rolling Stone.* **KIM WILSON,** *the singer for the* Fabulous Thunderbirds, lays it down on Dec. 3. The wonderful **ROCHES** tape a Christmas show (at 4 P.M.) on Dec. 4.

BROWNIES, 169 Avenue A, at 10th St. (429-8392)—Inching closer and closer to respectability, this former dive in the East Village now features a new stage, a beefed-up P.A. system, and a steady lineup of hardcore bands hungry for the big money. Dec. 4 belongs to **EDSEL** and **STIGMATA A GO GO.**

CAFÉ SIN-É, 122 St. Marks Pl. (982-0370)—A small peach-walled storefront, Sin-é is usually given over to a young, earthy crowd that drinks Rolling Rock or espresso and waits for some Irish musician or other to blow in and play a set. On Dec. 2, the Belgian band **K'S CHOICE** performs.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—Rock and roll always sounds best in a dump, which may be why this legendary club is still thriving. **GIN MILL** entertains on Dec. 3. . . . ¶ Next door, at CB's Gallery, **ELLIOTT SHARP** hosts an evening of experimental rock on Dec. 3.

CHICAGO B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—Dedicated to the music of the Windy City. **SAM LAY** performs on Nov. 30-Dec. 1, followed by **LUTHER (GUITAR) JOHNSON,** on Dec. 2-3.

CLEOPATRA SUPPER CLUB, 327 W. 44th St. (262-1111)—Live music, belly dancing, and an honest-to-God whirling dervish, every Wednesday through Sunday.

THE COOLER, 416 W. 14th St. (229-0785)—A comfortable lavender and stainless-steel paradise deep in the heart of the meat district. **SURGERY** operates on Dec. 3. On *Dec. 5, guitarist* **GARY LUCAS** *curates a free* evening of noise and art. Wednesday nights are given over to experimental d.j. spinoffs.

DOWNTIME, 251 W. 30th St. (695-2747)—A friendly split-level bar with a dazzling quasi-Cubist paint job and an above-average pool table. Friday night is Squeeze Box, a vinyl and velvet glamfest, hosted by the Mistress Formika.

FLANNERY'S, 205 W. 14th St. (929-9589)—A well-scrubbed, amiable Irish pub with many of the classic features (pints of Guinness, non-stop TV sports) and a few of the near-classics (a CD jukebox, a portrait of Elvis).

IRVING PLAZA, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—This sprawling two-floor establishment has been all things to all people: *meeting hall, rock club, jazz club, Off Broad*way theatre. **HOT TUNA** lumbers in on Dec. 2-3. . . . ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday night, at the Continental Club. The dancers all share a passion for the Lindy Hop, a dance that involves a lot of whirling and the occasional display of underwear. Sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

KAPTAIN BANANA, 101 Greene St. (343-9000)—French cabaret *en travesti* in SoHo. Ten dancers re-create the Court of Versailles, a carnival in Rio, Marlene Dietrich, and the Andrews Sisters. There's also a singing gorilla. Dining.

KNITTING FACTORY, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—**WEEN,** who perform here on Nov. 30, recently released "Chocolate and Cheese," an album of pure, hole-in-the-head weirdness. The chocolate of the title refers, presumably, to the band's flair for early Prince-era R. & B., while the cheese relates to Ween's taste for sophomoric humor. (One of the best tracks is "Spinal Meningitis Got Me Down.") In a world in which most bands give us everything but the kitchen sink, Ween gives us only the kitchen sink. A typical song includes two distorted guitars and a fairly lame drum track, with *Dean and Gene ranting and raving and* joking around on top. It may not sound like a winning formula, but much of "Chocolate and Cheese" is inspired, and you just can't stop listening.

LIMELIGHT, Sixth Ave. at 20th St. (807-7850)—A church turned eighties hot spot, this unholy venue currently plays host to a variety of techno and alternative acts. Wednesday night is Disco 2000.

MAXWELL'S, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—Many of the bands that play here today will be playing somewhere more expensive tomorrow. Dec. 2: The **GEFKENS.**

MERCURY LOUNGE, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—Beyond the long bar, you'll find an exposed-brick room with a stage packed with some very hip rock acts. **CHRIS WHITLEY** is in the house on Dec. 6.

NELL'S, 246 W. 14th St. (675-1567)—A Victorian-style club, home to an eclectic crowd of downtown youngsters dancing to throbbing funk and techno-pop. Monday night is Funky Buddha, with live bands and d.j. Derek Corley "on the wheels."

LES POULETS, 16 W. 22nd St. (229-2000)—The name may be French, but the music here is Latin: expect salsa, merengue, and the occasional cha-cha. Nov. 30: **LOS HERMANOS MORENO.** Dining.

SOUNDS OF BRAZIL, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great grass hut with a fruit-and-bamboo motif, dedicated to calypso, reggae, and the bossa nova. Nov. 30-Dec. 1: **MICHEL CAMILLO** performs with an eighteen-piece band. Tuesday nights, S.O.B.'s presents Soul Kitchen, an evening of seven*ties funk and R. & B. for devotees of Don* Cornelius. Closed Sundays. Dining.

TRAMPS, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—This broad, spacious, and agreeable club offers a consistent lineup of blues greats. Reggae oddity **EEK-A-MOUSE** is your host on Nov. 30. On Dec. 1: the rap and roll sounds of the **GOATS.** On Dec. 2, the **DIXIE DREGS,** featuring guitarist Steve Morse, perform extremely fast, mind-numbing acts of derring-do. Slow down, take it easy: **FOGHAT** returns on Dec. 3.

WEBSTER HALL, 125 E. 11th St. (353-1600)—A byzantine disco wonderland with four floors, a coffee shop, and a wig boutique. Wednesday is drag night. Psychedelic Thursdays feature grunge acts and cheap beer.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Vocalist **WESLIA WHITFIELD** is currently at work in the woody nook known as the Oak Room. Dining.

BALLROOM, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A cool green music hall that also features a tapas bar—if you haven't had dinner, you may never make it to the show. On Dec. 2, **IVY AUSTIN,** the talented soprano and comic actress from Garrison Keillor's radio shows, will star in "Christmas at Rainbow Corner, a Radio Musical," about a pinup girl in London.

BIRDLAND, *2745* Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—An airy two-tiered space with pastel walls and potted greenery. Nov. *30:* The **MICHAEL RAYE** quintet. Dining.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Jazz, mirrors, and a gift shop. The **DAVE BRUBECK** quartet continues through Dec. 4. The **JOE HENDERSON** quartet arrives on Dec. 6. Dining.

Green Day at Nassau Coliseum.

MARIA DEMARSE

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—On any given night, and well into the morning, one or another of New York's many formidable pianists can be found here. Through Dec. 3, **DONALD BROWN** and **JAMES WILLIAMS,** two loquacious neo-hard-bop pianists, will attempt discourse with a hundred and seventy-six keys. Dining.

Cajun, 129 Eighth Ave., at 16th St. (691-6174)—A New Orleans-style restaurant specializing in Dixieland and swing. On Fridays, catch the Canal Street Dixieland Jazz and Blues band. Saturdays belong to the New Atlantic Jazz band.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound pastel murals, and **BOBBY SHORT.** Time has not diminished the tasteful virtuosity of Short's ivory-tickling; nor has it taken the edge off his gregarious wit as a singer and showman. Now in his twenty-seventh year at the Carlyle, Short can still spin an Ira Gershwin lyric with all the sophistication, humor, and pathos it deserves. Also well served are gems by Duke Ellington, Dorothy Fields, Irving Berlin, and, of course, Cole Porter. A de-lightful, de-lovely evening. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **BARBARA CARROLL** presides at the piano. Carroll's timing is infallible, and she is equally at ease with legato figures and double-time sprints. Her vast repertoire has been known to include a funny "Sweet Georgia Brown" and a lilting "Here's That Rainy Day."

Cornelia Street Café, 29 Cornelia St. (989-9319)—Nov. 30: Pianist **JOANNE BRACKEEN** and bassist **CECIL MC BEE.** Tapping into the contemporary wellspring created by Tyner, Hancock, and Evans, Brackeen has fashioned an engaging personal sound at the piano. Everything she touches, from American songbook standards and Brazilian melodies to her own modernist pieces, is stamped with authority. Like an old married couple, Brackeen and McBee—an intensely powerful instrumentalist, who brings passion and intelligence to his playing—seem to read each other's minds and complete each other's musical sentences.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7900)—One of the city's top jazz spots. Guitarist **CHARLIE BYRD** is in through Dec. 4. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL** leads a trio. Dining.

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—A comfortable neo-Moroccan bar hidden inside the Time Café. The downstairs room, where bands perform, is a fine spot to take in a show. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

Fifty Seven Fifty Seven, 57 E. 57th St. (758-5757)—A cool, sumptuous piano-and-bass room in the Four Seasons Hotel. Thursdays through Sundays, **DONALD JOHNSTON** is the featured pianist. Dining.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Across the street from Lincoln Center, this restaurant and club features a handsome bar upstairs and a surreal performance space downstairs. The genial Canadian pianist and singer **DIANE KRAULL,** who performs here on Dec. 5, has studied with the great pianist and singer Jimmy Rowles, and it shows. Her melodic distillations have a refreshing brevity and directness, and her repertoire (which includes Fats Domino's "I'm Walking") is stylish and clever.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Brass rails, vintage posters, Hirschfeld drawings, and a piano. Nov. 30-Dec. 3: Pianist **JUDY CARMICHAEL** and saxophonist **DAN BLOCK.** Carmichael knows her way around the knuckle-busting repertoire of Fats Waller, James P. Johnston, and other Harlem piano wizards of the twenties and thirties. The duo expands to a trio on Dec. 2-3, when trumpeter **PETER ECKLAND** arrives.

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Dec. 2-3: The **BILL FRISELL** band and **SPANISH FLY.** With the recent release of two terrific recordings—his own "This Land," and Ginger Baker's "Going Home Again" (which features his most impassioned playing)—Frisell, the thinking man's guitar hero, is enjoying a career high. He says more with space and silence than most of his fellow fretmen convey in an avalanche of notes. Spanish Fly features another guitar hero: David Tronzo, the world's only bebop slide player. **WAYNE HORVITZ** and **ROBIN HOLCOMB,** who play on Dec. 5, are part of that other Seattle scene, the one comprising new-jazz and new-music expatriates from New York's downtown scene. Horvitz is a scrupulous keyboard eclectic who traffics only in surprises; Holcomb's poetic songs of rural mythology have a force that belies their composer's understated performance style.

Le Madeleine, 403 W. 43rd St. (246-2993)—Every Sunday evening, guitar great **GENE BERTONCINI** lights up this cozy Hell's Kitchen bistro with his simmering melodicism and chordal grace.

Metropolis, 31 Union Square W. (675-2300)—The basement of this swank café is now hosting a series of high-profile gigs. Having played with Lester Young, Charlie Parker, and John Coltrane, **ROY HAYNES,** who performs on Dec. 2-3, could easily afford to rest on his laurels. Instead, the drummer has made his role as jazz elder statesman an active one, nurturing new talent and handing down the secrets of leading an airtight small group. Tuesdays are given over to the **GEORGE GEE ORCHESTRA,** a seventeen-piece swing band.

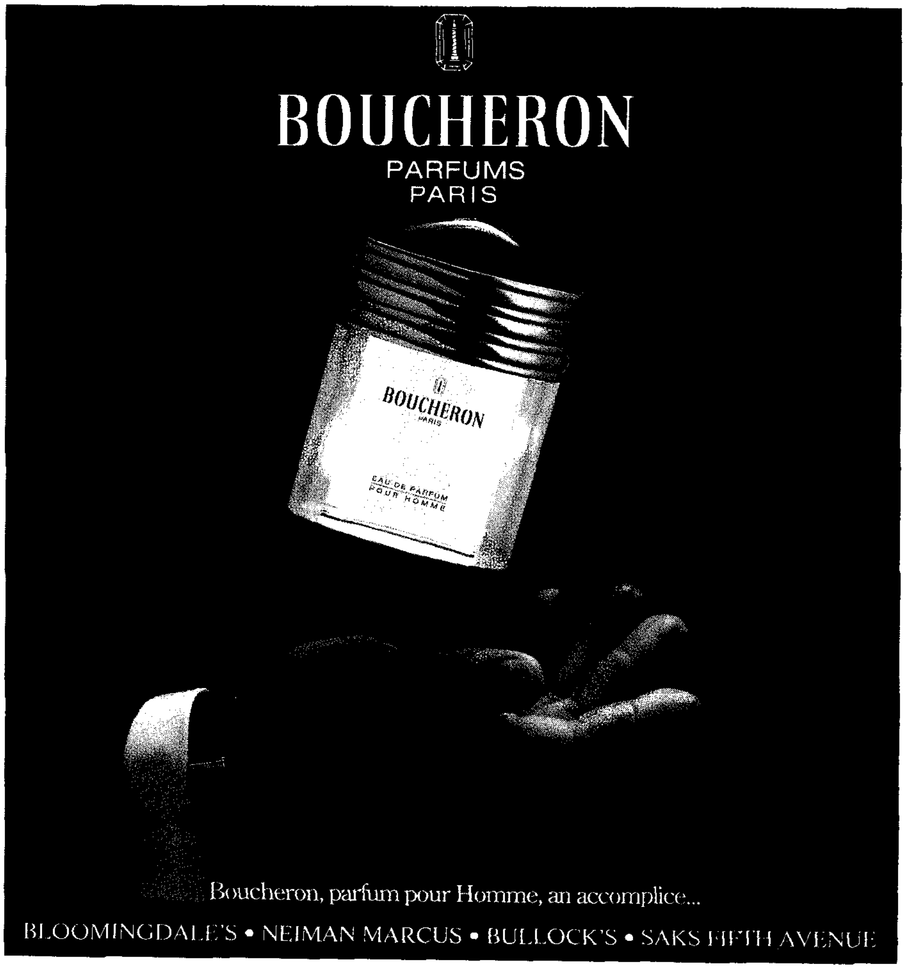
Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—On Mondays, Woody Allen continues his night job as clarinet player in the **NEW ORLEANS FUNERAL AND RAGTIME ORCHESTRA,** a Dixieland-jazz ensemble. Closed Sundays.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A plush, old-fashioned night club, sixty-five floors above it all, complete with Art Deco fixtures, intimate glitter, and a panoramic view as dizzying as the tab. **LORNA LUFT,** Judy Garland's younger daughter, is a skilled and charismatic performer. Her current engagement, which runs through mid-December, includes show tunes and an extended Burt Bacharach medley. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in the Rainbow Room, there's a revolving dance floor and swinging big-band music courtesy of the Rainbow Room Orchestra, featuring vocalists Michael Andrew and Claudette Sierra. Closed Mondays.

Red Blazer Too, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—Thursdays belong to Stan Rubin's big band and Phoebe Légère; Fridays to Lew Anderson's big band and the Kit McClure sextet; and Saturdays to Bob Cantwell and his Stompers.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A jazz outpost where the musicians are always top-shelf. Guitarist **WOLFGANG MUTHSPIEL,** in through Dec. 4, is Germany's answer to John Scofield, and for this gig he'll be backed by two celebrated veterans (albeit twenty-five years apart) of Bill Evans' trio, drummer Paul Motian and bassist Marc Johnson. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter **MILES EVANS** is in action on Mondays. Dining.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The world's most famous jazz club is also the last place in town that still looks, feels, and smells like a classic jazz club—subterranean, smoky, and thick with the spirits of past masters. Through Dec. 4: the only real *band* to arise from the jazz renaissance—led by the man who caused the whole ruckus in the first place, **WYNTON MARSALIS.** Working as an ensemble rather than a group of soloists backed by a rhythm section, Marsalis's septet combines skill and smarts, while leaving plenty of room for the star trumpeter to shine. Reservations are a must. Pianist **MC COY TYNER** begins a weeklong run on Dec. 6. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.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ART

Divine Illuminations

If the brouhaha over the restoration of the Sistine Chapel frescoes left you wondering what Renaissance paintings really looked like—bright and colorful? tastefully understated?—you can satisfy your curiosity at a magnificent new exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum (through February 26). It brings together a group of little masterpieces that are in perfect condition. Their burnished gold and primary colors sparkle with the same intensity they had on the day the paint dried, because they've spent most of their lives between the covers of books.

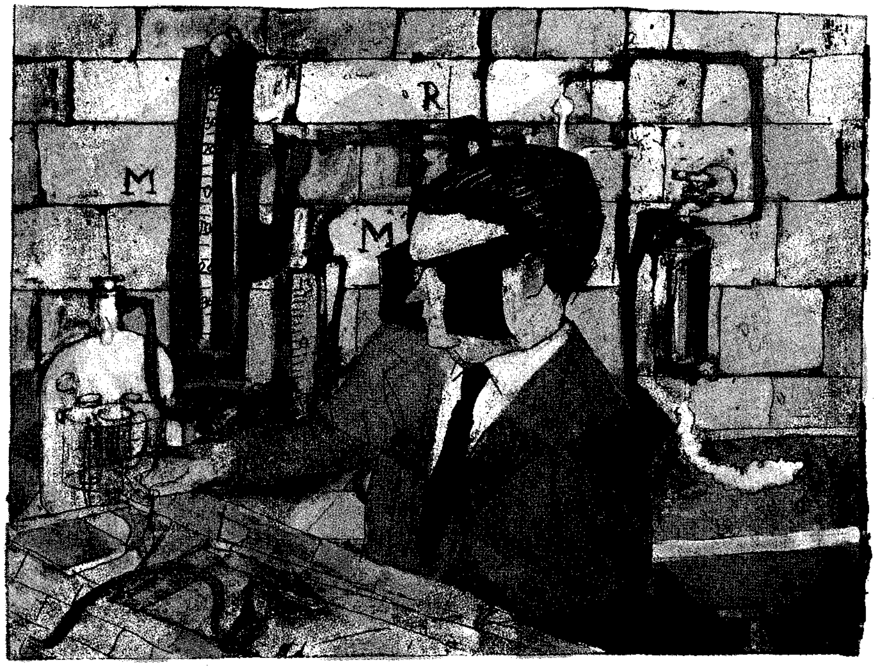
Anyone who thinks that illuminators took a back seat to the panel painters of the age should inspect the lavish hymnal of the Compagnia di Sant'Agnese (a lay religious group); it is a triumph of early-fourteenth-century storytelling. The show includes works in other mediums, too, notably a Madonna and Child engraved *in gold foil on glass by Lorenzo Monaco* (it has an unearthly, almost radioactive glow) and some exquisite silk-and-gilt embroidery from a ceremonial robe. As the title, "Paintings and Illumination in Early Renaissance Florence 1300-1450," suggests, there are even some panel paintings—beautiful ones. But in this exhibit, the illuminations shine the brightest.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—The annual Christmas tree and Neapolitan baroque crèche will be on display for the holiday season. Opens Dec. 1. . . . ¶ "Greek Gold: Jewelry of the Classical World." Opens Dec. 2. . . . ¶ "Thomas Eakins and the Metropolitan Museum of Art." . . . ¶ "The Violin Masterpieces of Guarneri del Gesù." Twenty superlative violins by Giuseppe Guarneri "del Gesù" (1698-1744), brought together to mark the two-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of their maker's death. The instruments are exceptionally beautiful, their attenuated lines enhanced by an array of woods and variously tinted varnishes. Through Dec. 4. . . . ¶ "Painting and Illumination in Early Renaissance Florence 1300-1450." . . . ¶ "Lucie Rie / Hans Coper: Masterworks by Two British Potters." . . . ¶ "Willem de Kooning: Paintings" includes "Marilyn Monroe" (1954), a powerful evocation of soft female sexuality. (There is a concurrent show of de Kooning's work at the Stone gallery.) . . . ¶ "The Photographs of Édouard Baldus: Landscapes and Monuments of France." Shots from the nineteenth century. Through Dec. 31. . . . ¶ "Origins of Impressionism" begins with paintings seen at the historic and influential Salon of 1859 and includes nudes, landscapes, and still-lifes. . . . NOTE: On Dec. 1, in observance of Day Without Art, the museum will remove several objects and replace them with a text about AIDS. Other work will be shrouded, and the flowers in the Great Hall will be removed; the exterior lights will be dimmed from 7:45 to 8; and the flags will be at half-mast. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Mapping" features some twenty works of art devoted to the role of cartographic fact and fantasy in contemporary art. Through Dec. 20. . . . ¶ "American Politicians: Photographs from 1843 to 1993." Through Jan. 3. . . . ¶ "Cy Twombly: A Retrospective." Nearly a hundred works, mostly paintings, by this heir to Abstract Expressionism. (A concurrent show of his works is at the Gagosian gallery.) . . . ¶ "The Prints of Louise Bourgeois" focusses on the artist's etchings and lithographs. Through Jan. 3. . . . NOTE: On Dec. 1 at 6, in observance of Day Without Art, the museum will present a one-man show by James Lecesne, who will perform excerpts from Eve Insler's "Extraordinary Measures," and a slide show of Nan Goldin's AIDS photographs. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"The Italian Metamorphosis, 1943-68." Chairs, typewriters, a case of fabulous shoes, a car, a vacuum cleaner—even some painting and sculpture. Although this massive exhibition, which examines the way Italy reinvented itself after the Second World War, sprawls around the rotunda with no real logic, it's a potent reminder of the impact that Italian art and design have had in the past half century. And it's a fun crawl. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6, and Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)



Jess at the Whitney Museum.

Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway—"Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky." . . . NOTE: Throughout the day on Dec. 1, in observance of Day Without Art, there will be screenings of videos on AIDS-related topics in the lobby. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—"Black Male: Representations of Masculinity in Contemporary American Art." (Reviewed in this issue.) . . . ¶ "Jess: A Grand Collage, 1951-93." Jess's world has room for everything. The quirky Bay Area collagist and painter's work falls into three categories: dense phantasmagoric collages, painstakingly pieced together from the artist's enormous collection of visual sources; "Salvages," found canvases over which the artist has painted a second image; and "Translations," heavily impastoed oils that faithfully transfer onto canvas found images such as Victorian engravings, a photograph of the Beatles, medical illustrations, etc. Through Dec. 4. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—"Royal Tombs of Sipán." Gold, silver, and gilded copper objects of the Moche, a pre-Inca civilization of northern Peru and one of the world's major ancient civilizations. The curators are probably right to identify Sipán as the richest burial site ever excavated in the New World. Through Jan. 1. . . . NOTE: In observance of Day Without Art (Dec. 1), several exhibits will be shrouded and a large scroll listing the names of people who haved died from AIDS, to which visitors can add names, will be on display in the Hall of Human Biology and Evolution. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

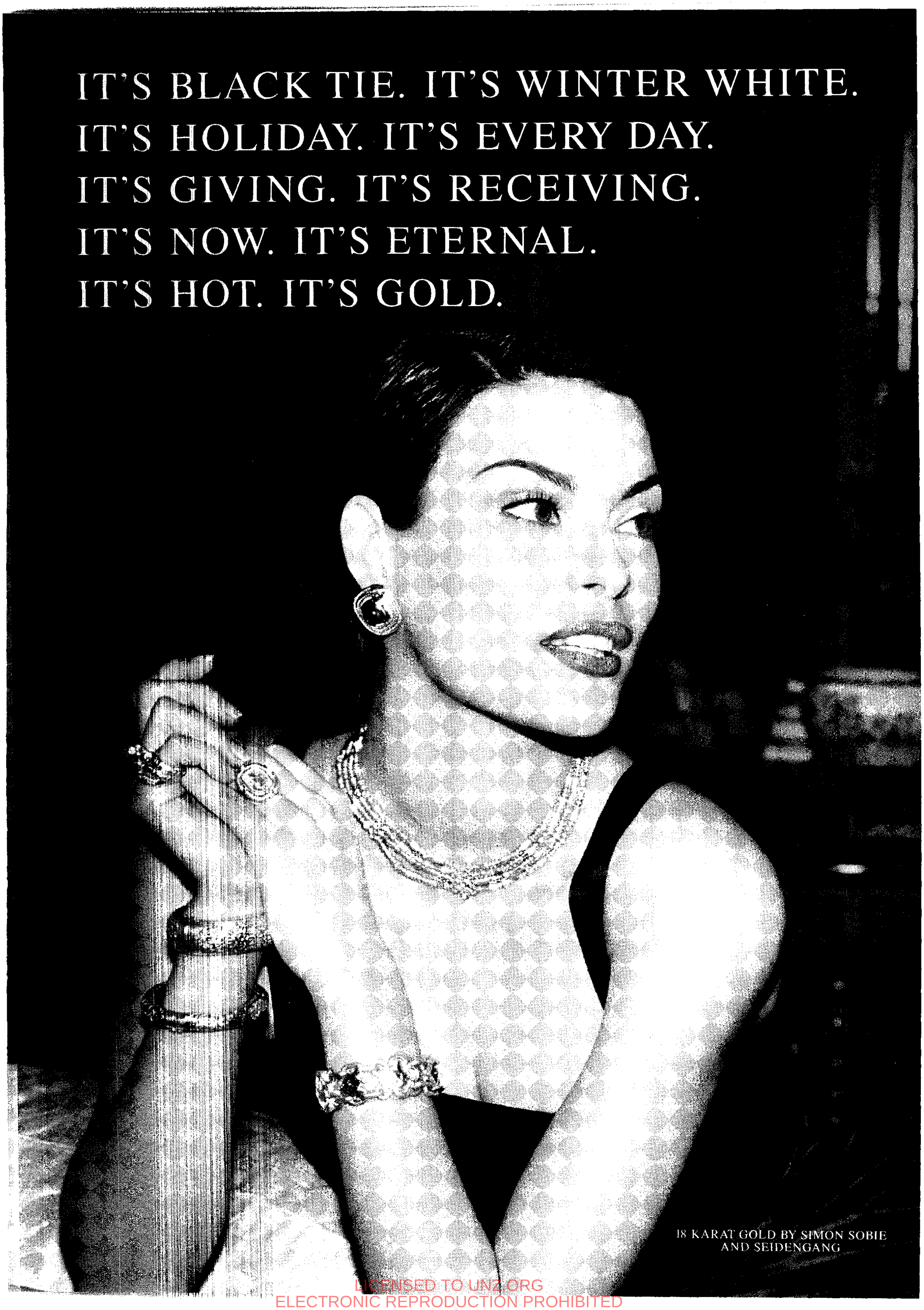
Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—"Realms of Heroism: Indian Paintings at the Brooklyn Museum." . . . ¶ Dale Chihuly's "The Brooklyn Wall," an installation of blown glass, is on view in the lobby. . . . NOTE: In observance of Day Without Art, on Dec. 1 at 2 the museum will screen the film "Living Proof: H.I.V. and the Pursuit of Happiness," directed and produced by Kermit Cole, who will be available to answer questions following the show. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—"Good Offices and Beyond: The Evolution of the Workplace" surveys the development of equipment designed to manage paper, numbers, time, and information, beginning with the invention of the paper clip in 1900 and ending with a concept model for a personal digital assistant (non-human, that is). . . . ¶ "Images Against AIDS" is an international exhibit of posters. Through Dec. 12. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Dia Center for the Arts, 548 W. 22nd St.—"Worlds Envisioned: Alighiero e Boetti and Frédéric Bruly Bouabré." . . . ¶ "Andy Warhol: The Last Supper Paintings." . . . NOTE: In observance of Day Without Art, on Dec. 1, there will be videos, and a book display in the lobby. (Open Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St.—"John Constable: Drawings, Watercolors, Oil Sketches, and Paintings from a Private Collection." . . . NOTE: On Dec. 1, in observance of Day Without Art, the museum will relabel Antoine Watteau's "The Portal of Valenciennes" with a meditation on the

ROBERT ANDREW PARKER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18 KARAT GOLD BY SIMON SOBIE
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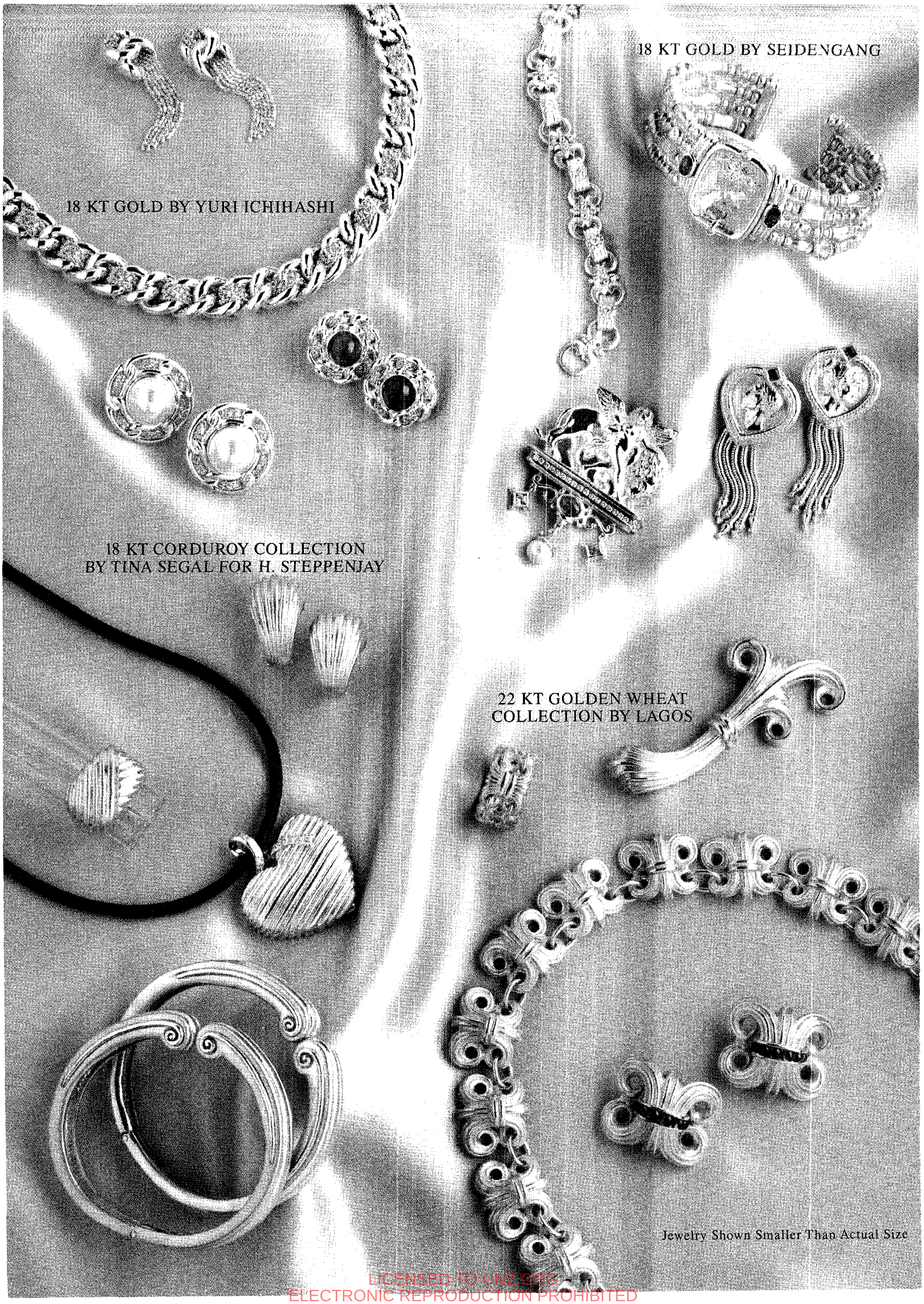
18 KT GOLD BY YURI ICHIHASHI
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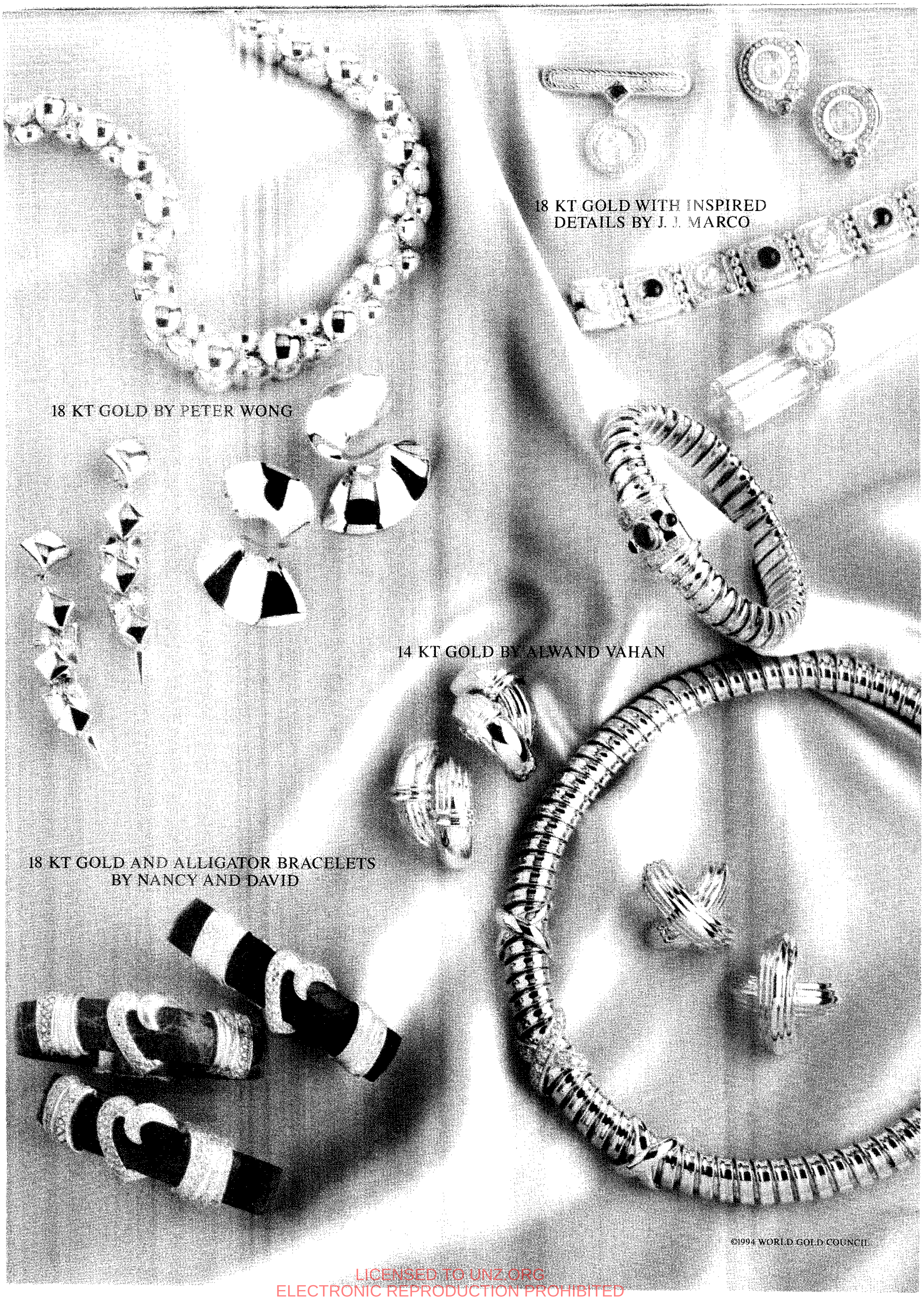
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Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"Day Without Art, December 1, 1994: 'Images of Job.'" Through Dec. 4. . . . ¶ "The Thaw Collection: Master Drawings and New Acquisitions." The word "great" is overused in the art world: it should be reserved for occasions like this one. All the major schools are represented in this collection, but the French drawings are especially fine. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5; Saturdays, 10:30 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Museum of American Folk Art, Columbus Ave. at 65th St.—"Every Picture Tells a Story: Word and Image in American Folk Art." . . . **note:** In observance of Day Without Art, on Dec. 1, the museum will place poems about AIDS in front of three shrouded works of art. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11:30 to 7:30.)

National Museum of the American Indian, 1 Bowling Green—"Creation's Journey: Masterworks of Native American Identity and Belief." . . . ¶ "All Roads Are Good: Native Voices on Life and Culture." . . . ¶ "This Path We Travel: Celebrations of Contemporary Native American Creativity." . . . **note:** On Dec. 1, in observance of Day Without Art, the museum will screen videos concerned with AIDS, made by Native American artists. (Open daily, 10 to 5.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"Garbage! The History and Politics of Trash in New York City." . . . ¶ "e.e. cummings @ 100: An Anniversary Exhibition." . . . **note:** In observance of Day Without Art, on Dec. 1, there will be an installation of envelopes addressed to those who have died of AIDS. (Open Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, 10 to 6; Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6. The following lists lead off with new shows.)

Arman—A dozen paintings, plus a group of sculptures, by the neo-Dadaist. Opens Nov. 30. Through Dec. 31. (Marisa del Re, 41 E. 57th St.)

James Brooks (1937-92)—Works on paper from the fifties and sixties by an Abstract Expressionist. Opens Dec. 6. Through Jan. 14. (Washburn, 20 W. 57th St.)

Claes Oldenburg—Drawings and small-scale models of early large-scale sculptures. Opens Dec. 2. Through Jan. 7. (Pace, 32 E. 57th St.)

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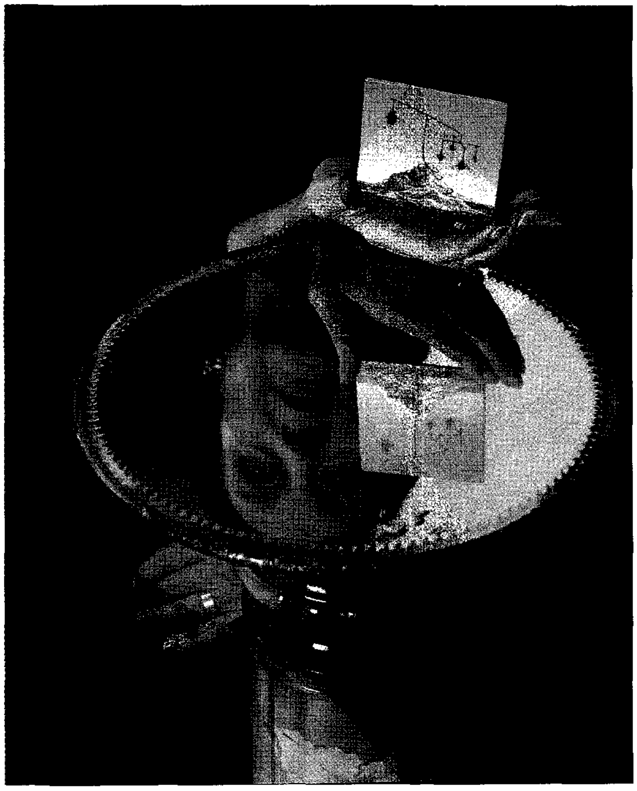
Antoine-Louis Barye (1795-1875)—Barye was a careful observer of nature, especially of the big cats in the zoos and menageries of Paris. His mature watercolor style, dark and precise, anticipates the work of Arthur Rackham and other turn-of-the-century book illustrators. Through Dec. 9. (Wildenstein, 19 E. 64th St. Open Mondays; closed Saturdays. A benefit show: general admission is three dollars.)

Fanny Brennan—Thirty-five new oils in the artist's signature dollhouse-Surrealist style—witty, wistful, faraway views of a natural world overtaken by magic. In a nighttime seascape, clouds and moon hang suspended on a mobile; in the middle of a desert, a manhole cover emits puffs of steam; in a deep-green stone-walled garden, a huge pearl sits perched like a Buddha. None of the works are larger than 3¼ x 3¼ inches, but somehow their tininess intensifies their power. Through Dec. 17. (Babcock, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Emlen Etting—A show of watercolors from 1930 to 1970, by a fashion illustrator with a line reminiscent of Cocteau's. During the postwar years, when Dior's New Look was the rage, Etting was covering the London, Paris, and Milan collections, and his work captures the cheerful yet brittle haut-monde cosmopolitanism of the era. Also on view are his dizzy, rather inebriated plates for Rimbaud's "Une Saison en Enfer" and various flights of homoerotic fantasy. Through Dec. 20. (Stubbs Books & Prints, 153 E. 70th St. Open Mondays.)

Richard Serra—In "Nova Scotia Drawings" (1993-94), a series of paint-stick-on-paper works begun at the artist's summer home on Cape Breton Island, the master of monumental sculpture manages to endow the fragile medium of drawing with surprising mass and heft. Through Dec. 23. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)



Fanny Brennan at Babcock.

Jean-Michel Basquiat (1960-88)—Paintings with a black-and-white palette. Through Jan. 7. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

Michael Byron—Representational oil-on-plaster paintings of animals, landscapes, and figures. Through Jan. 14. (Baron/Boisanté, 50 W. 57th St.)

Willem de Kooning—Fifty-five paintings from the early thirties to the late sixties. Through Jan. 22. (A retrospective of the artist's work is currently on view at the Metropolitan Museum.) (Stone, 113 E. 90th St.)

Niki de Saint Phalle—A double show of "Tableaux Éclatés," in which figures affixed to the canvas break apart and reassemble electronically. The pieces are colorful, flamboyant, and often humorous—children will enjoy them. Through Dec. 17. (James Goodman and Davidson, both at 41 E. 57th St.)

Alberto Giacometti (1901-66)—Sixty-three sculptures and ten paintings, from the early twenties to 1965. Through Dec. 10. General admission is five dollars. (Acquavella, 18 E. 79th St. Open Mondays.)

Morris Graves—Thirty floral paintings from the past three decades. Through Dec. 20. (Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St.)

Hans Hofmann (1880-1966) / **Katsura Funakoshi**—An exhibit designed to show the monumentality of the artist's small works. / Sculptures and drawings by the Japanese figurative sculptor. Through Jan. 7. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.)

Rebecca Horn—New mechanical sculptures and an installation. Through Dec. 31. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Robert Kulicke—Still-lifes of fruits and flowers, mounted in frames designed and made by the artist. Through Dec. 23. (Davis & Langdale, 231 E. 60th St.)

Karl Schrag—Landscapes, still-lifes, and self-portraits, by an eighty-two-year-old artist. Through Dec. 23. (Kraushaar, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

David Smith (1906-65)—Fifteen bronze reliefs depicting wartime evils. Through Jan. 28. (Marks, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St.)

Steve Wheeler (1912-91)—Intricate modernist paintings indebted to Native American art, in a show inaugurating the gallery's new uptown space. Through Dec. 17. (Snyder, 20 W. 57th St.)

"The Box: From Duchamp to Horn"—Including works by Joseph Cornell, Lucas Samaras, and Sol LeWitt. Through Dec. 10. (Ubu, 16 E. 78th St.)

"Drawn to Text: Comix Artists as Book Illustrators"—An international survey of the history of alternative comics that also shows how Robert Crumb, Javier Mariscal, Lorenzo Mattotti, Jacques Tardi, and Art Spiegelman approach book illustrations. Through Jan. 17. (Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St.)

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Isamu Noguchi (1904-88)—Two pieces from 1985: "Beginnings," five stone masses reminiscent of a Japanese garden, and "Ends," a granite sculpture. Opens Dec. 3. Through Jan. 21. (Pace, 142 Greene St.)

"Joe's Garage"—Installations by sculptors, among them Donald Lipski and Jessica Stockholder, who work with discarded material. Opens Dec. 1. Through Dec. 24. (Tz'Art, 28 Wooster St.)

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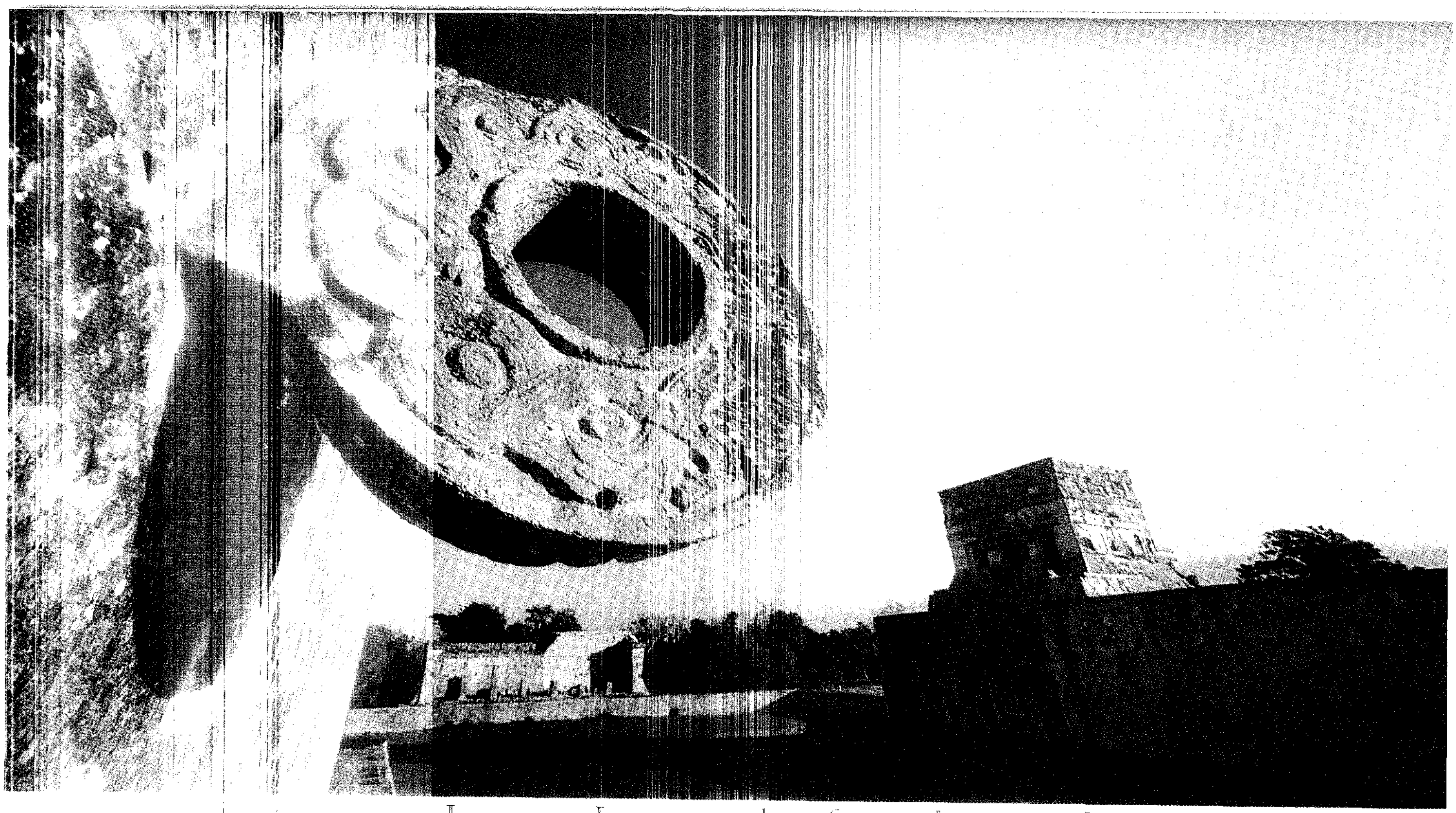
Rafael Ferrer—Works by an artist who divides his time between the States and the Dominican Republic, including a canvas tent painted in a garish, expressionistic style. The unearthly light, bold color, and strange, sophisticated compositions of the paintings give the lie to their folkish technique. But best of all are the ceramics—hefty stoneware pineapples glistening with natural glazes. Through Dec. 7. (Hoffman, 429 West Broadway.)

Tom Palmore—Flawless (if not always interesting) Photo-Realist portraits of animals in unusual circumstances. "Santa Fe Opera" puts a quail on a cactus in front of a star-spangled stage curtain; in "Fern Valley," a toucan perches in front of what appears to be a nineteenth-century landscape of the jungle. Plus the best cat paintings in town. Through Dec. 8. (Ciacciola, 125 Wooster St.)

Charles Arnoldi—Abstract paintings reflecting the environment in California, where the artist lives. Through Dec. 30. (Cowles, 420 West Broadway.)

Richard Artschwager—A witty suite of packing cases in strange, bulky shapes, from an artist who knows how to make the commonplace threateningly enigmatic. Constructed of unfinished plywood and studded with rivets, the containers forthrightly invoke Magritte's upright coffins. (Charles Addams also comes to mind.) Through Dec. 17. (Boone, 417 West Broadway.)

IRAIDA ICAZA



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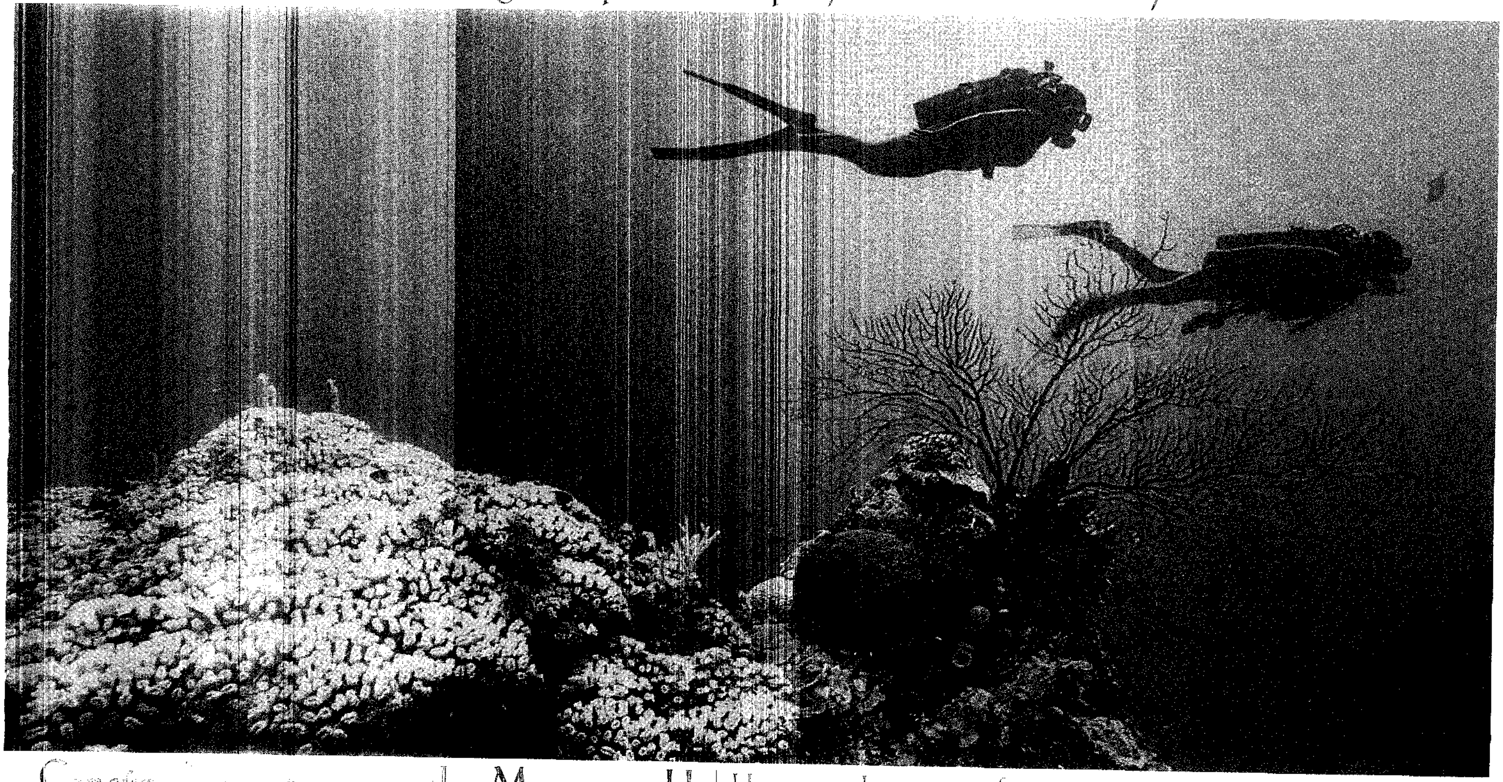

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ART—Cont'd

LEX BRAES—Abstract paintings in the hues of the Scottish highlands, by an artist who knows the landscape. Through Dec. 30. (Stephen Rosenberg, 115 Wooster St.)

MIKE COCKRILL / PETER MAYER—Paintings on the theme of the American Dream. / Representational cityscapes. Through Dec. 24. (Foster, 62 Crosby St.)

CHUCK CONNELLY—Paintings of animals dressed up and engaged in human activities. Through Dec. 22. (Lennon, Weinberg, 580 Broadway.)

ELLSWORTH KELLY—Recent paintings in the inaugural show of a new satellite space for the uptown gallery. Through Jan. 29. (Marks, 522 W. 22nd St. Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

CONSTANCE KHEEL—Paintings with circles, meant to evoke celestial images. Through Dec. 12. (Vega, 107 Mercer St.)

ROY LICHTENSTEIN—Recent paintings of nudes. Through Dec. 17. (Castelli, 420 West Broadway.)

THOM MERRICK—Sculptures of suspended automobile parts. Through Dec. 31. (Gibson, 568 Broadway.)

MARISA MERZ—Abstract sculptures made of copper, wax, lead, and clay, by a prominent figure of the Italian Arte Povera movement. Through Dec. 17. (Gladstone, 99 Greene St.)

ROXIE MUNRO—Cityscapes. Through Dec. 10. (Bibro, 584 Broadway.)

CY TWOMBLY—"Untitled Painting," a monumental, primarily abstract triptych begun in Italy in 1979. Through Dec. 17. (A retrospective of the artist's work is at the Museum of Modern Art.) (Gagosian, 136 Wooster St.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

ILSE BING—Vintage photographs of Parisian dance halls. Through Jan. 7. (Houk Friedman, 851 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)

DAVID LEVINTHAL—Fifteen large-scale prints that examine Nazi iconography and the horror of the Holocaust. Through Dec. 5. (Borden, 560 Broadway.)

GJON MILI (1904-84)—Photographs of actors, entertainers, and other celebrities, taken between 1930 and 1970. Through Dec. 3. (Greenberg, 120 Wooster St.)

MARIO CRAVO NETO—Black-and-white prints by a Brazilian photographer. Through Dec. 3. (Witkin, 415 West Broadway.)

LEO RUBINFIEN—Photographs taken from airplanes. Through Dec. 10. (Mann, 42 E. 76th St.)

CINDY SHERMAN—Four large self-portraits. Through Dec. 17. (Skarstedt, 42 E. 76th St.)

KENNETH SNELSON—Three decades of panoramic photographs of urban sites. Through Dec. 3. (Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St.)

DORIS ULMANN (1882-1934)—Vintage images of the Appalachia and Gullah regions of South Carolina. Through Dec. 3. (Gallery 292, at 120 Wooster St.)

NICK WAPLINGTON—Fifteen images by an artist best known for surreptitiously placing his own image within his landscape photographs. Through Dec. 3. (Burden, 20 E. 23rd St.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY MIDTOWN, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St.—"Talking Pictures," a delightful exhibition that features photographs and commentary by individuals not generally associated with the medium—Dennis Hopper on Henri Cartier-Bresson, Tony Bennett on Gjon Mili, John Epperson (a.k.a. Lypsinka) on a clip from "Bye Bye Birdie." The show is organized around a simple and ingenious conceit. You wander around with what looks like a cellular phone, dial the number of a particular photograph (there are more than fifty), and listen to, say, Naomi Campbell musing on a great anonymous photograph of Josephine Baker. Through Dec. 4. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum and the Museum of Modern Art.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

Today I Am a Man

MADAME VERA GALUPE-BORSZKH and her divas-in-waiting in La Gran Scena Opera Company have been casting their not so subtle spell since 1981, which makes the current run at the Kaye Playhouse their thirteenth season. Opera lovers may debate whether that number is lucky or unlucky, but the company has sidestepped the question by proclaiming the engagement its Bar Mitzvah Season. To mark this coming of age, the real-life tenors, baritones, and basses who don wigs and corsets to turn themselves into the divas of La Gran Scena will hitch up their tessituras and dig into operatic sacred cows with steak knives and whatever other weapons they find in the prop box. "Tosca," "Manon," and a visionary Garden State "Rosenkavalier" set in a shopping mall are all on the menu, as are nods to the Three Tenors ("Brief—is what deserves," explains Galupe-Borszkh, with Slavic disdain) and divafied Broadway ("Is greatest American art form of century: crossover"). While regretfully acknowledging that the standard operas offer little in the way of bar-mitzvah fare, Galupe-Borszkh insists that the troupe will celebrate the occasion in appropriate fashion: "Like all good bar-mitzvah boys, we will waste no time to count the receipts at the end."

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Alice Tully Hall, 875-5050; for Avery Fisher Hall, 875-5030; for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall, 247-7800; and for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719.)

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA—**LADY MACBETH OF MTSENSK**, by Shostakovich, with Maria Ewing, Vladimir Bogachov, Jonathan Welch, and Sergei Koptchak; conducted by James Conlon. (Nov. 30 at 8.) . . . With Vladimir Galouzine replacing Mr. Bogachov. (Dec. 3 at 8.) . . . **MADAMA BUTTERFLY**, in the opening performances of a new production, with Catherine Malfitano, Wendy White, Richard Leech, and Dwayne Croft; Daniele Gatti. (Dec. 1 and Dec. 5 at 8.) . . . **DON GIOVANNI**, with Sharon Sweet, Carol Vaness, Hei-Kyung Hong, Jerry Hadley, James Morris, and Bryn Terfel; Leopold Hager. (Dec. 2 at 8.) . . . With Sharon Sweet, Patricia Schuman, Hei-Kyung Hong, Jerry Hadley, James Morris, and Herbert Perry; Mr. Hager. (Dec. 6 at 8.) . . . **RIGOLETTO**, with Sumi Jo, Ramon Vargas, and Juan Pons; Christian Badea. (Dec. 3 at 1:30.) (Metropolitan Opera House.)

LA GRAN SCENA OPERA COMPANY—The guys in guises conclude their New York run. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Dec. 2-3 at 8.)

AMATO OPERA COMPANY—Opening performances of "La Traviata." (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. Dec. 3 at 7:30 and Dec. 4 at 2:30.)

OPERATIC CINEMA—See "Late Runs" in The Movies for listings of opera-related films currently being shown at the Japan Society and the Brooklyn Museum.

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC—Kurt Masur conducts Schubert's "Rosamunde" Overture, Rossini's

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ever sees
things
as they
really are.
If he did he
would cease
to be an
artist."

Oscar Wilde

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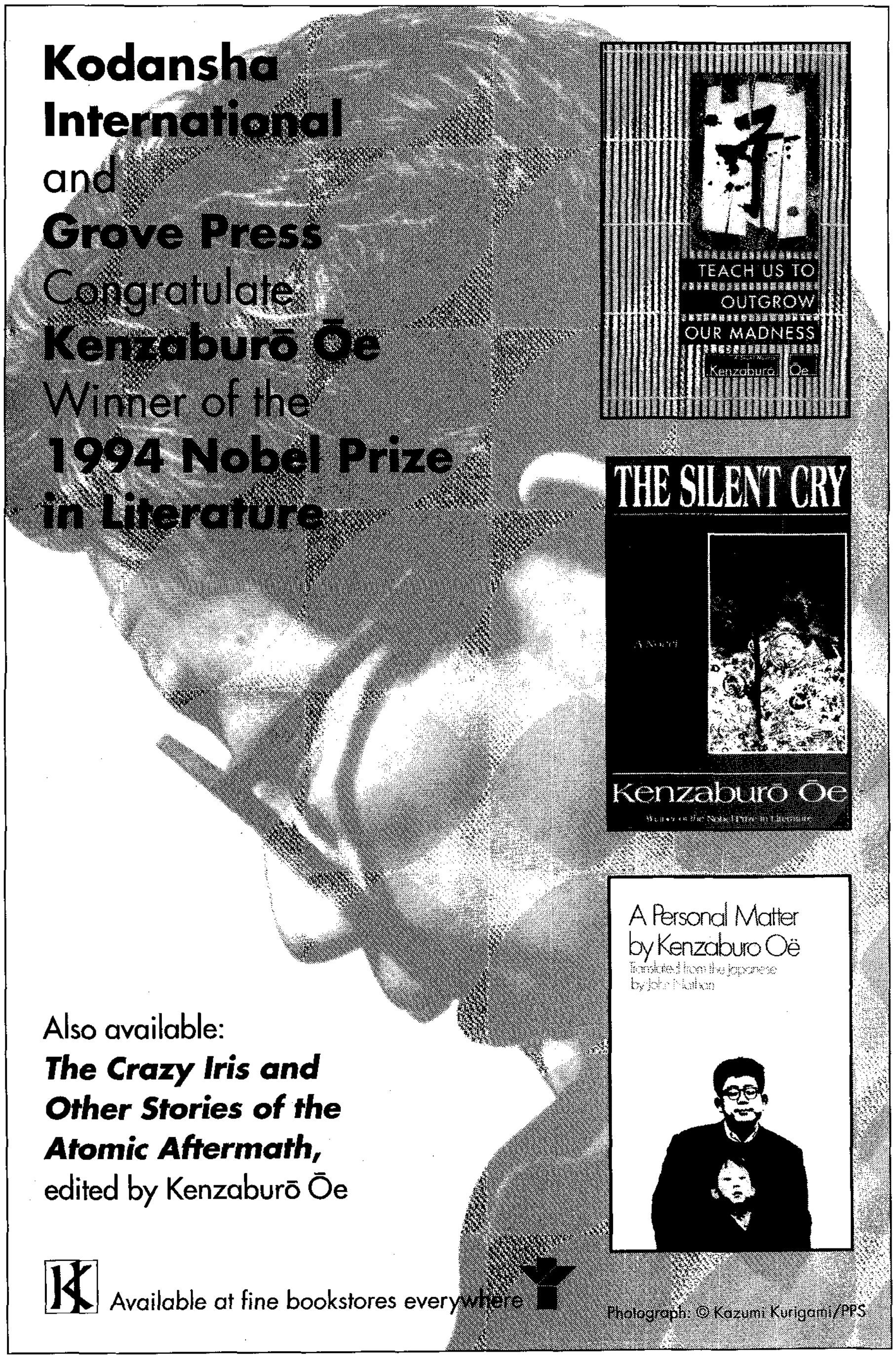
"Introduction, Theme and Variations" (featuring clarinettist Stanley Drucker), and Bruckner's Symphony No. 3. (Avery Fisher Hall. Dec. 1 and Dec. 3 at 8; Dec. 2 at 2; and Dec. 6 at 7:30.)

Venezuelan Festival—The conclusion of a celebration of music from Venezuela. The Ensamble Gurrufio performs three different programs of indigenous music and new compositions derived from such folk genres as joropos and gaitas. (Hostos Center for the Arts and Culture, 450 Grand Concourse, at E. 149th St., the Bronx. 1-718 518-4455. Nov. 30 at 7:30. . . . ¶ El Museo del Barrio, Fifth Ave. at 104th St. Dec. 1 at noon, followed at 1:15 by a symposium on national identity in music. Free of charge, but call 977-8495 for reservations. . . . ¶ Weill Recital Hall. Dec. 2 at 8, with a pre-concert composers roundtable at 7.) . . . ¶ The Cuarteto Latinoamericano plays Venezuelan string quartets. (Lefrak Concert Hall, Queens College, Flushing. Dec. 1 at 7:30. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ The American Composers Orchestra Chamber Ensemble, directed by Paul Lustig Dunkel and Tania León, presents works by Roberto Cedeño Laya, Modesto Bor, Juan Vicente Lecuna, Teresa Carreño, Alfonso Tenreiro-Vidal, Manuel Sosa, Diógenes Rivas, Alfredo Rugeles, and Ricardo Lorenz Abreu (his "Mar Acá," a maracas concerto, featuring Luis Julio Toro); with the assistance of soprano Barbara Ann Martin, flutist Luis Julio Toros, and pianist Antonio Fermín. (Weill Recital Hall. Dec. 1 at 8, with a pre-concert composers roundtable at 7.) . . . ¶ Dennis Russell Davies conducts the American Composers Orchestra in United States premières of works by Juan Carlos Núñez, Mr. Lorenz Abreu, and Alfredo del Mónaco (his "Tientos de la Noche Imaginada," a guitar concerto, featuring Rubén Riera), as well as Antonio Estévez's "La Cantata Criolla" (with tenor Idwer Alvarez, baritone William Alvarado, and the New York Choral Society). (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 4 at 3, preceded by a composers roundtable at 1:30.)



Juilliard Orchestra—Dennis Russell Davies conducts Hindemith's "Der Schwanendreher" (with violist Carol Rodland) and Mahler's Symphony No. 6. (Avery Fisher Hall. Nov. 30 at 8.)

New York Madrigal Singers—Erik-Peter Mortensen directing. Dec. 1 at 8: Renaissance music from Italy, Spain, and the Low Countries. (Norwegian Seamen's Church, 317 E. 52nd St. Admission by contribution.) . . . ¶ Dec. 4 at 2: A wide-ranging program of seasonal works from the Renaissance, including Marian motets by Lassus and Victoria. (Church of the Holy Cross, 329 W. 42nd St. Admission by contribution.)

Heidelberg Chamber Orchestra—In its annual visit, offering concerti grossi by Corelli, Vivaldi, Telemann, and Bach (his Fourth "Brandenburg" Concerto), as well as Mozart's A-Major Flute Quartet. (Church of the Transfiguration, 1 E. 29th St. 684-6771. Dec. 2-3 at 8.)

City Island Baroque Ensemble—The group kicks off a three-week survey of Bach's "Brandenburg" Concertos by playing the Third and Sixth, as well as a concerto grosso by Corelli. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 1-718 885-2478. Dec. 4 at noon.)

Cosmopolitan Symphony Orchestra—Keri-Lynn Wilson conducts Augusta Read Thomas's "Fanfare for Chamber Orchestra," Tchaikovsky's "Variations on a Rococo Theme" (with cellist Alexis Pia Gerlach), and Beethoven's Symphony No. 7. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Dec. 4 at 2. . . . **NOTE:** Violinists Eric Grossman and Xiao-Dong Wang will play a pre-concert recital, open to ticket holders, beginning at 1.)

Choral Symphony Society and Cantata Singers—David Labovitz directs Bach's "Christmas Oratorio." (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. Dec. 4 at 2. For information about tickets, call 864-7541.)

Western Wind Ensemble—Tovah Feldshuh narrates the singers' Hanukkah program. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Dec. 4 at 3.)

Cornerstone Chorale and Orchestra—Claudia Dumschat directs Vivaldi's Gloria and Bach's Cantata No. 140 ("Wachet Auf"). Also on the program is Debussy's Piano Trio, played by the Ambrosia Trio. (Cornerstone Center, Our Saviour's Atonement Church, 178 Bennett Ave., at 189th St. Dec. 4 at 3. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

West Village Chorale—Gwen Gould directs Britten's "St. Nicolas Cantata" and "Hymn to the Virgin" and Pergolesi's Magnificat; with tenor Patrick Greene, the St. Luke's Choristers, and members of the Columbia Festival Orchestra. (St. Luke in-the-Fields, 487 Hudson St., at Grove St. Dec. 4 at 4. Tickets at the door on the day of the concert.)

Music by Salamone Rossi—Sacred and secular works by the seventeenth-century northern-Italian composer, performed by the Early Music Ensemble of Boston and the New York Concert Singers. (Merkin Concert Hall. Dec. 4 at 7.)

Jupiter Symphony—Jens Nygaard conducts Bach's Concerto for Two Violins, Mozart's D-Major Piano Concerto (K. 537, with David Buechner), and Haydn's Symphony No. 64. (Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church, 152 W. 66th St. Dec. 5 at 2 and 7, and Dec. 6 at 8. For information about tickets, call 799-1259.)

Mannes Orchestra—Michael Charry conducts Mendelssohn's Symphony No. 4, Dallapiccola's "Variazioni per Orchestra," and Kodály's "Háry János" Suite. (Alice Tully Hall. Dec. 5 at 8.)

RECITALS

Songs of Norway—A free mini-festival of Norwegian composers and performers, at the Bruno Walter Auditorium, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center. The performers include soprano

Anne-Lise Berntsen, violinist Ole Bøhn, cellist Darrett Atkins, and pianists Einar Steen Nokleberg and Pamela Pyle. Nov. 30 at 3: Music by Grieg and Arne Nordheim (who will be on hand to speak about Norwegian music).... ¶ Dec. 2 at 3: Works by Mr. Nordheim, Johan Halvorsen, Grieg, and Johan Kvandal, as well as Norwegian folk songs.... ¶ Dec. 3 at 2:30: Contemporary music, by Rolf Wallin, Synne Skouen, and Mr. Nordheim. (See Above and Beyond listings for related events.)

Music by Leo Sowerby—Bass-baritone Robert Osborne and pianist Malcolm Halliday perform works by the composer, the centennial of whose birth will be celebrated next year; including the premières of three unpublished song cycles. (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 50th St. Nov. 30 at 6:30. Admission by contribution.)

Technoconcerts—Nov. 30 at 8: A performance by the Impossible Music ensemble, which uses portable compact-disk players and other lightweight electronic appliances to manipulate pre-recorded tracks. This concert features compositions—so to speak—by David Weinstein and Ben Manley (who has recently gotten interested in the musical capacities of his PowerBook computer). (Greenwich House Music School, 46 Barrow St. 242-4770.) ... ¶ Dec. 1 at 8: Mutantrumpeter Ben Neill and the First Avenue ensemble interact with electronic instruments. (Washington Square Church, 135 W. 4th St. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.) ... ¶ Dec. 5 at 8: The New York University New Music Ensemble presents electronic instruments, live musicians, and experimental dancers in a program that includes the première of a piece by Ay Ling Kong for dancer and microtonally tuned harp. (New York University Theatre, 35 W. 4th St. No tickets necessary.)

Bargemusic—Presenting Schumann's Piano Quartet and works for flute, cello, and piano by Haydn and George Crumb (his "The Voice of the Whale"). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. Dec. 1 at 7:30 and Dec. 4 at 4.)

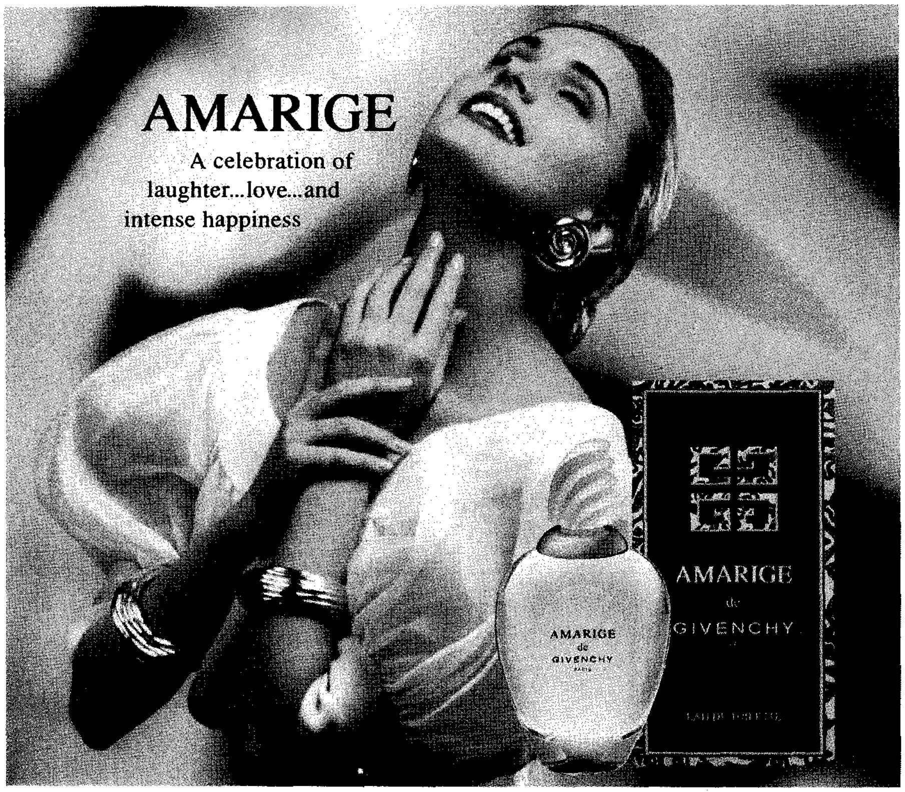
Ahn Trio—Three sisters from South Korea (violinist Angella Ahn and her sisters, cellist Maria and pianist Lucia, who are twins) perform Shostakovich's E-Minor Piano Trio. Violinist Stephen Clapp joins them for Fauré's C-Minor Piano Quartet, and violist Samuel Rhodes completes the ensemble for Schumann's Piano Quintet. (Alice Tully Hall. Dec. 1 at 8. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 769-7406.)

Festival Chamber Music Society—Performing works by François Devienne, Nielsen, and Dvořák (his E-Flat-Major Piano Quartet). (Merkin Concert Hall. Dec. 1 at 8.)

Downtown Music Productions—In what has become an annual event, the organization presents works by composers who have died of AIDS or who are living with the disease. On this year's program are the premières of works by Lee Gannon and Fred Hersch, Stephen Weinstock's "The Piano" (on a text by the late Mexican writer Paul Hidalgo-Durán), and works by Nicholas Schaffner, Michael Seyfrit, Louis Weingarden, Chris DeBlasio, and Kevin Oldham. (Middle Collegiate Church, Second Ave. at 7th St. Dec. 2 at 8. For information about tickets, call 699-6901.)

Fabio Bidini—Pianist, performing sonatas by Clementi (in B Minor) and Beethoven (in F Minor, Op. 57, the "Appassionata"), as well as Chopin's "Andante Spianato and Grande Polonaise" and Scherzo No. 2. (Alice Tully Hall. Dec. 2 at 8.)

The Guarneri Sound—At the Metropolitan Museum, events relating to the museum's exhibit of violin masterpieces by Guarneri "del Gesù." Dec. 2 at 8: Violinists Leonidas Kavakos, Elmar Oliveira, Ruggiero Ricci, Aaron Rosand, and Eugen Sarbu play on instruments from the exhibit.... ¶ Dec. 3 at 7: Members of the Guarneri Quartet join violin maker Robert Bein and violin dealer Peter Biddulph to discuss Guarneri's



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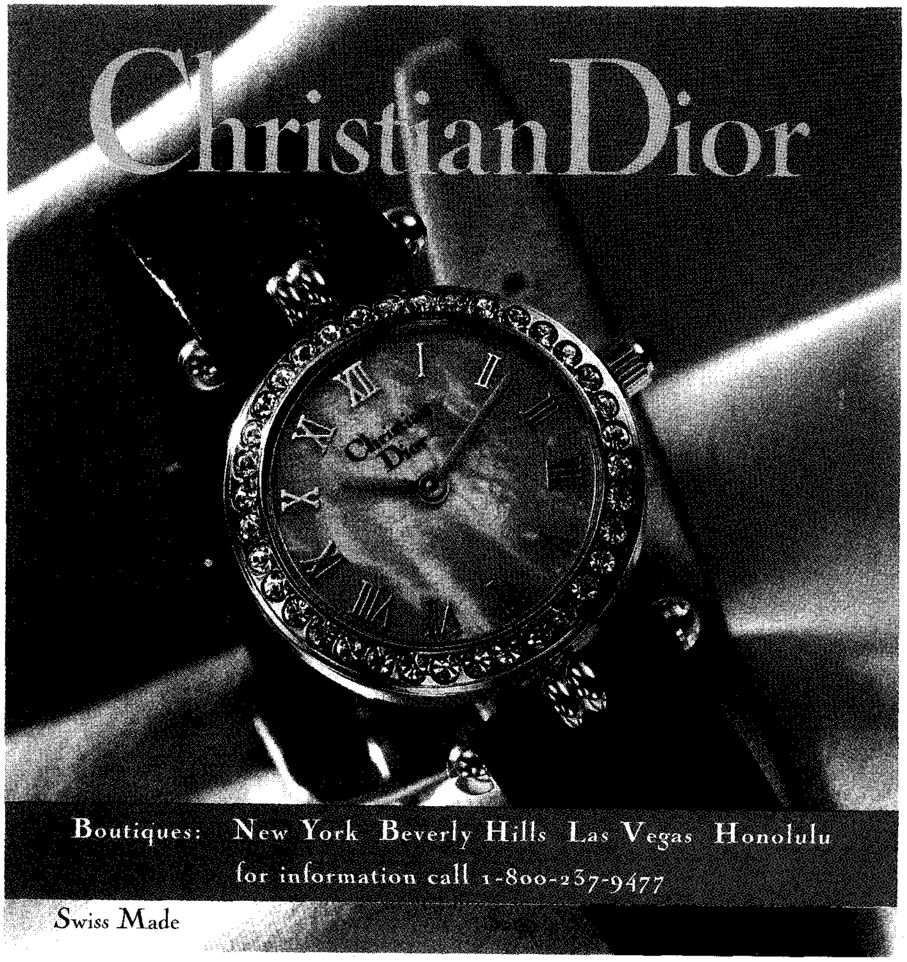
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CLASSICAL MUSIC–Cont'd

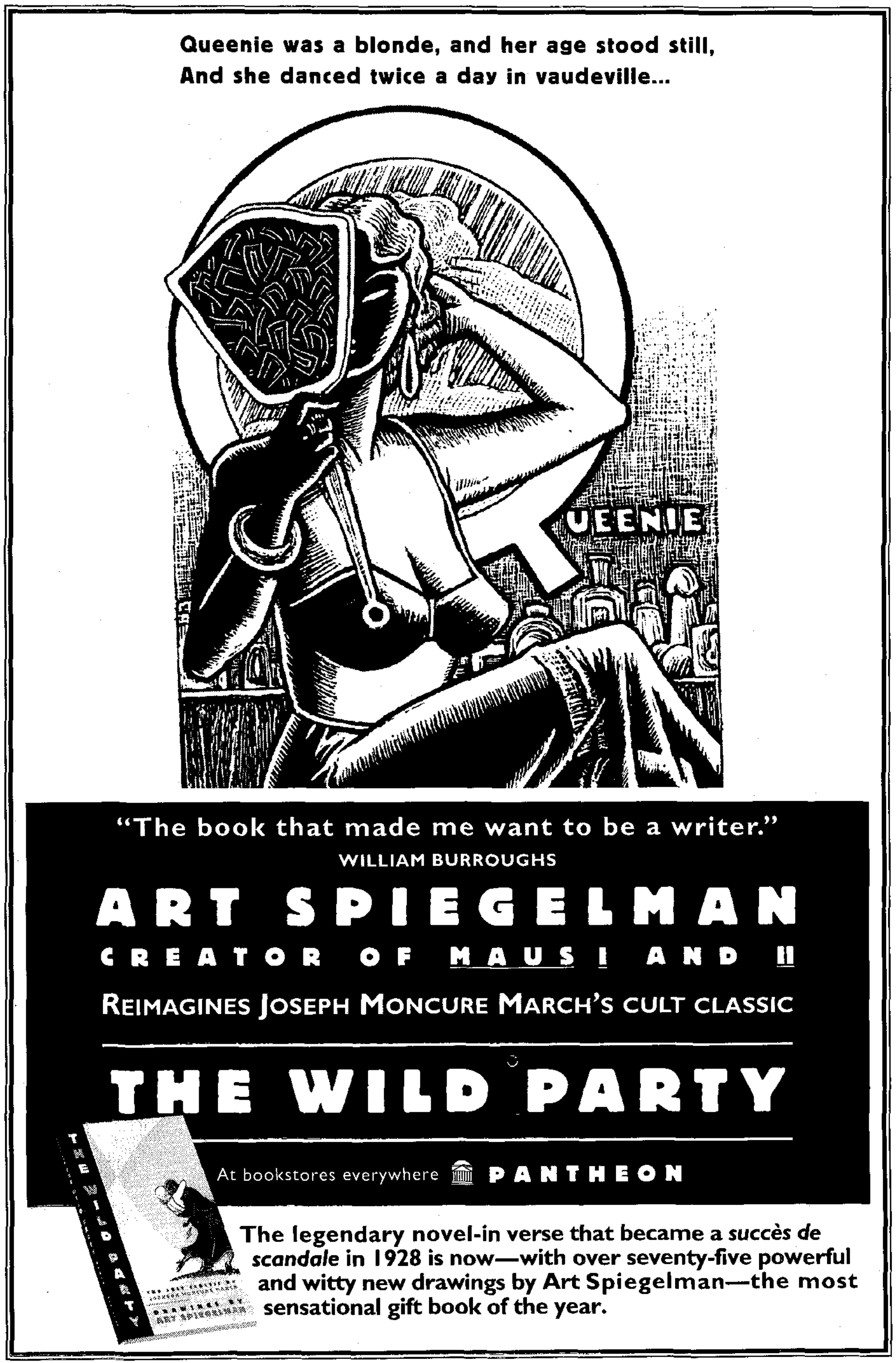
work. . . . ¶ Dec. 3 at 8: A concert by the Guarneri Quartet—none of whose members, as it happens, usually plays a Guarneri instrument. Go figure. They'll perform quartets by Haydn (in G Major, Op. 77, No. 1) and Bartók (his Second), as well as Mozart's C-Major Viola Quintet (K. 515, with violist Daniel Avshalomov). (Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949.)

Joseph Kalichstein—Pianist, performing Schubert's A-Minor Sonata (D. 845), Schumann's "Faschingschwank aus Wien," and transcriptions by Liszt and by Mr. Kalichstein of Schubert and Schumann songs. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Dec. 3 at 8.)

Eroica Trio—Performing Beethoven's "Kakadu" Variations, Martinů's "Five Short Pieces," and Mendelssohn's D-Minor Piano Trio. (Walter Reade Theatre, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. Dec. 4 at 11 A.M. For information about tickets, call 875-5050.)

St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble—Performing secular works by Bach: the trio sonata from "A Musical Offering," the A-Major Oboe d'Amore Concerto (featuring Stephen Taylor), and the Wedding Cantata No. 210 ("O holder Tag, erwünschte Zeit," with soprano Heidi Grant Murphy). (Cantor Auditorium, Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway. Dec. 4 at 2. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert. . . . ¶ Weill Recital Hall. Dec. 6 at 8.)

Fauns in the Afternoon—A program of music relating to Debussy's "Prélude à l'Après-midi d'un Faune," which was premièred just one hundred years ago, and which will be heard here in Debussy's arrangements for duo-piano and for flute and piano. Also on the bill is a melodrama by Liszt that foreshadows Debussy's familiar whole-tone scales, Dukas's "La Plainte, au Loin, du Faune" (written in homage to Debussy), and other works by Debussy, Ravel, and Dukas; with pianists Ophra Yerushalmi and Gilbert Kalish, flutist Michel Debost, baritone Paul Rowe, and narrator Gerard Benson. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Dec. 4 at 3.)


Queenie was a blonde, and her age stood still,
And she danced twice a day in vaudeville...

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Dirk Joeres—In his New York début recital, the pianist performs Schumann's "Arabeske" (Op. 18), Schubert's B-Flat Major Sonata (D. 960), and short works by Brahms and several composers in his circle (Albert Dietrich, Theodor Kirchner, Julius Otto Grimm, and Dvořák). (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. Dec. 4 at 5.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—The members of the Juilliard String Quartet team up with the society in a program that comprises Haydn's F-Major Quartet (Op. 77, No. 2), Schoenberg's "Verklärte Nacht," and Brahms' C-Minor Piano Quartet. (Alice Tully Hall. Dec. 4 at 5 and Dec. 6 at 7:30.)

Chin Kim and Yury Kim—The violinist and the pianist perform sonatas by Mozart and Brahms (his Second). (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. Dec. 4 at 6 and 8. Admission is free, but call 876-6000 to reserve a seat.)

Remembering Rosemary Glyde—A tribute to the late violist and composer from the New York Viola Society, which she founded in 1992; including her "Whydah" (for solo viola), her "Weiji" (for four violas), and Judith Shatin's "Glyph" (for viola, piano, and string quartet), which was written for Ms. Glyde. (Kosciuszko Foundation, 15 E. 65th St. 734-2130. Dec. 4 at 7:30.)

Miami String Quartet—Performing quartets by Ginastera (his First and Second) and Bruce Adolphe (his Fourth, titled "Whispers of Mortality"). (Weill Recital Hall. Dec. 5 at 7.)

Christine Brewer—Soprano, performing songs by Mozart, Strauss, Joseph Marx, Celius Dougherty, Richard Hundley, and Carolee Coombs-Stacey; with pianist Kirt Pavitt. (Walter Reade Theatre, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. Dec. 5 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 875-5050.)

Sandra Miller—Baroque flutist, in a program that includes a suite by Jacques-Martin Hotteterre ("le Romain") and sonatas by Jean-Marie Leclair, C. P. E. Bach, and J. S. Bach; with harpsichordist James Richman and viola da gambist Lisa Terry. (Merkin Concert Hall. Dec. 6 at 8.)

DownTown Ensemble—Presenting English music written since the seventies, including works by Cornelius Cardew and Michael Parsons. (Greenwich House Music School, 46 Barrow St. Dec. 5 at 8. Tickets at the door the night of the concert.)

Regina Resnick Tribute—Film clips and recordings of the mezzo-soprano, but no live performances, apart from an interview. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Dec. 6 at 8.)

Rich Strings—Chamber music for ensembles an instrument or two richer than string quartets: Boccherini's E-Major Cello Quintet, Mozart's G-Minor Viola Quintet, and Brahms' Second String Sextet; with violinists Isaac Stern, Jaime Laredo, and Mark Peskanov; violist Steven Tenenbom; and cellists Sharon Robinson and Timothy Eddy. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Dec. 6-7 at 8.)

SPORTS

BASKETBALL

Knicks—Vs. the Washington Bullets, Dec. 3. . . . ¶ Vs. the Boston Celtics, Dec. 6. (Game time, 7:30.)

Nets—Vs. the Sacramento Kings, Dec. 3 at 8. . . . ¶ Vs. the Atlanta Hawks, Dec. 6 at 7:30.

FOOTBALL

Giants—Away until Dec. 11, when they'll host the Cincinnati Bengals.

Jets—Away until Dec. 10, when they'll host the Detroit Lions.

(The Knicks play at Madison Square Garden, 465-6000; the Nets at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-3900; and the Giants and the Jets at Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands, 1-201 935-8111.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Artless—Day Without Art (Dec. 1) was conceived as a way to make people aware of the tremendous number of artists dying from AIDS-related causes. The effort continues. Several museums will shroud paintings, red ribbons that symbolize the struggle against AIDS will be distributed, and the Bravo cable network will black out for sixty seconds. Dec. 1, from 7 A.M. to midnight: A marathon reading, in front of City Hall, of the names of those who have died. . . . ¶ At 7:15: A candlelight march, leaving from the arch in Washington Square Park, will travel down LaGuardia Pl. to West Broadway, and end at City Hall Park. . . . ¶ From 7:45 to 8: For "Night Without Light," there will be a blackout of office towers, bridge floodlights, theatre marquees, and desk lamps. (For information on related events, call Visual AIDS at 206-6758.)

Gunn Crazy—Californian/British poet Thom Gunn is in town. Dec. 1 at 7: A discussion, with Roger Conover, about the poet and painter Mina Loy. (Poets House, 72 Spring St. Tickets at the door on the night of the talk.) . . . ¶ Dec. 4 at 4: Gunn will read from his own work. (Mazer Theatre, Educational Alliance, 197 E. Broadway, at Jefferson St. Admission by contribution.) . . . ¶ Dec. 6 at 8: A reading, with poet W. S. DiPiero. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.)

Northern Lights—The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts is in the midst of its Art Norway festival. Dec. 1 at 6: "Ibsen's Women," a one-woman show by Juni Dahr. . . . ¶ Dec. 5 at 6: Rolf Fjelde will give a lecture titled "A Doll House: Initiation and the Evolving Self," which will be followed by a video of the Ibsen play. . . . ¶ Film screenings—Dec. 6 at 1 and 4:30: "The Telegraphist." . . . Dec. 6 at 2:30: "Sigrid Undset: A Portrait." . . . Dec. 6 at 3:30: Excerpts of the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra playing work by Grieg. (Bruno Walter Auditorium, Lincoln Center. No tickets necessary. See Classical Music listings for related events.)

Fine Print—Some two hundred and fifty publishers will display their alternative-press offerings at the seventh annual Small Press Book Fair. To honor the *Paris Review,* John Ashbery, Marilyn Hacker, Norman Mailer, Susan Minot, Grace Paley, George Plimpton, and others will read from their own work. (General Society Library, 20 W. 44th St. Dec. 3-4, from 10 to 6. For schedule information, call 764-7021.)

Remembering Amy Clampitt—The friends and family of the poet Amy Clampitt, who died in September, are offering a memorial service, which will feature music and poetry selected by Ms. Clampitt. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. Dec. 5 at 4.)

Prairie Music—Garrison Keillor will share the microphone with Toby Twining Music, the Hopeful Gospel Quartet, and the Turtle Island String Quartet, for his second local broadcast of "A Prairie Home Companion." (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Dec. 3 at 5:45.)

Readings—Dec. 2 at 7: Mary Gordon will read from her own work. (D'Agostino Hall, New York University, 108 W. 3rd St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Dec. 5 at 8: Robert Glück and David Trinidad will read from their own work. (A Different Light, 151 W. 19th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Dec. 5 at 8: The Belgian Hugo Claus and the Netherlander Cees Nooteboom will read. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.) . . . ¶ Dec. 6 at 7: Lucy Grealy and Lawrence David will read from their own work. (Limbo, 47 Avenue A, at 4th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Dec. 6 at 7:30: Margaret Atwood will read from "Good Bones and Simple Murders," her new collection of short fiction. (Shakespeare & Co., 2259 Broadway, at 81st St. No tickets necessary.)

Talks—Dec. 6 at 6: Wynton Marsalis will speak in conjunction with the publication of his book, "Sweet Swing Blues on the Road." (New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. 930-0571.) . . . ¶ Dec. 6 at 6:30: Mel Bochner, Lucy Lippard, Michael Joaquin Grey, and Roberta Smith, among others, will participate in a discussion, "Donald Judd Reconsidered." (Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St. 570-3652.)

Walks & Tours—Dec. 4 at 2: A tour of the Arthur Ross Pinetum in Central Park will identify the seventeen conifer species growing there. Meets on Central Park West, at 81st St. . . . ¶ Dec. 4 at 3: The Riverside Park Fund will lead the hardy on a walk through the park. For more information, call 870-3070.

LAURA LJUNGKVIST

FOR KIDS

(A list of activities for children accompanied by their parents or other adults.)

"Judy and the Maccabees"—A Hanukkah musical by the Poppy Seed Players, inviting audience participation. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. Dec. 4 at 11 A.M.)

Please Sit Down—"Chair Aware," a family program at the Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts, offers three "interactive seatings": imaginative role-playing and theatre games (involving "straight, curvy, stiff, comfy, simple, and crazy chairs"), a gallery tour of unusual chairs, and a reading from "Be Seated: A Book About Chairs," by James Cross Giblin. (18 W. 86th St. Dec. 4, from 1 to 4. Preregistration is required; call 501-3011.)

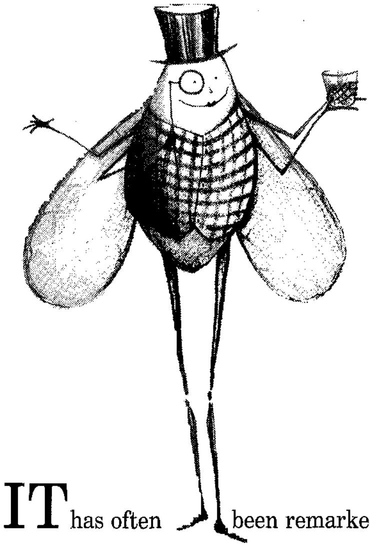
Bookmaker—Books of Wonder will host a reading by Madeleine L'Engle, author of the Newbery Medal winner "A Wrinkle in Time." She'll read from "Troubling a Star," her latest book and the companion to "A Ring of Endless Light." (132 Seventh Ave., at 18th St. Nov. 30, from 6 to 8. No tickets necessary.)

"Swan Lake?"—Kids and their parents can learn the principles of classical-ballet technique, in a workshop sponsored by ArtsConnection. "The Dancer and the Dance," a lecture and demonstration, will follow. (120 W. 46th St. 302-7433. Dec. 3. Workshop at 12:30; performance at 3.)

Hold the Mint Jelly—A rare appearance by everyone's favorite ovine, Lamb Chop, who is in town with Shari Lewis for eight Christmas-season performances on Broadway. (Richard Rodgers Theatre, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100. Dec. 6 at 7. Through Dec. 11.)

Fran's Pandas—Deadpan wit Fran Lebowitz, author of the best-selling "Metropolitan Life," will read from her first children's book, "Mr. Chas and Lisa Sue Meet the Pandas," in which two seven-year-old New Yorkers discover a pair of runaway pandas in their building and introduce them to life in the big city. (The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. 219-2166. Dec. 4 at 3.)

And Don't Forget—The Big Apple Circus (268-0055), at Lincoln Center's Damrosch Park through Jan. 8.



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"The Macallan never hurt a fly, and nor does a fly hurt The Macallan!" Ten minutes later indeed the insect stirred and flew off.

"There you are," said Hamish triumphantly. "And now you can give me a *gnat's more.*" '

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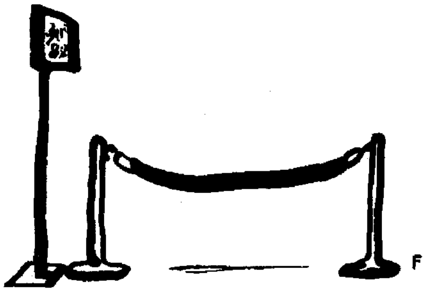

THE MOVIES

FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

Boys Life—Three short films by New York directors, on the subject of gay life: "Pool Days," by Brian Sloan; "A Friend of Dorothy," by Raoul O'Connell; and "The Disco Years," by Robert Lee King. Opening December 2. (Quad Cinema.)

Cobb—Tommy Lee Jones as baseball great Ty Cobb, in a movie written and directed by Ron Shelton. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) Opening December 2. (Gemini and Lincon Square.)

Tom and Viv—Willem Dafoe is T. S. Eliot, Miranda Richardson is Vivien Haigh-Wood, the poet's first wife, and Rosemary Harris is his mother-in-law. Michael Hastings and Adrian Hodges wrote the screenplay, based on Hastings' 1984 drama; Brian Gilbert directed. Opening December 2. (Cinema II.)

Trapped in Paradise—Nicolas Cage, Jon Lovitz, and Dana Carvey play three brothers—petty criminals trapped in a small Pennsylvania town on Christmas Eve. Written and directed by George Gallo. Opening December 2. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Murray Hill Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, and National Twin.)

CURRENT FILMS

(The signed notes are by Anthony Lane, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given. Theatre addresses and phone numbers are listed on page 50.)

The Adventures of Priscilla Queen of the Desert—Paragons of camp become campers, of sorts, in this cult-pleasing tale of a transsexual (Terence Stamp) and two drag queens (Hugo Weaving and Guy Pearce) who take a lip-synching act from Sydney to a resort in arid central Australia. Stephan Elliott, the writer-director, has one original idea—posing creatures of the night in wild sunbaked settings. As crossover drag sagas go, it's neither as robustly funny as "La Cage aux Folles" nor as lively and poetic as the best parts of "Outrageous!"—M.S. (Village East Cinemas.)

Barcelona—The second film by the writer and director Whit Stillman ("Metropolitan") is a culture-clash comedy about a pair of conservative young Americans (played by Taylor Nichols and Chris Eigeman) in early-eighties Barcelona. Although the picture begins promisingly, its charm peters out fast. Every scene seems to make the same not very interesting point: that Americans get a bum rap from foreigners. Stillman's style is placid and a little smug—prematurely gray. In just two movies he has found the sort of rut that most filmmakers take decades to settle into. Also with Tushka Bergen and Mira Sorvino.—T.R. (8/15/94) (Carnegie Hall Cinema.)

The Beans of Egypt, Maine—Jennifer Warren directed this adaptation of Carolyn Chute's 1985 novel about a clan of rural lowlifes. With Kelly Lynch, Martha Plimpton, Rutger Hauer, and Patrick McGraw. Screenplay by Bill Phillips. (Village East Cinemas.)

Bullets Over Broadway—A nicely structured piece of silliness from Woody Allen, set in the theatre world of the nineteen-twenties. John Cusack is the Woody substitute, an earnest young playwright who needs to discover an existence beyond the stage; Chazz Palminteri steals the picture as the taciturn gangster who swaps places with him, becoming as ruthless in his aesthetics as he is with a gun. Around this neat switch Allen assembles a crowd of near-caricatures—opportunities for Dianne Wiest, Jim Broadbent, Jennifer Tilly, and others to show their stuff.—A.L. (10/24/94) (19th Street East 6, Cinema I, Orpheum VII, Art Greenwich Twin, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Clerks—Dogged, responsible Dante (Brian O'Halloran) does a slow burn over a long day at the Quick Stop cash register. His girlfriend Veronica (Marilyn Ghigliotti) shocks him with her record of casual fellatio; his buddy Randal (Jeff Anderson) shocks customers at the adjacent video store with casual insults. The humor of two clerks arguing about ethics and sex deflates before the halfway mark, but the writer-director, Kevin Smith, dishes up some funny profanity in his low-budget black-and-white début.—M.S. (Angelika Film Center and 68th St. Playhouse.)

Eat Drink Man Woman—Another film comedy from Ang Lee, the director of "The Wedding Banquet." The aging Mr. Chu (Sihung Lung) is a widowed chef, living in Taipei with his three daughters, each of whom is getting itchy for the world beyond. (Watch out for the exquisite Chien-Lien Wu as Jia-Chien, the pushiest of the three.) Mr. Chu is a King Lear of the kitchen: a master on his own ground, slapping fish around and blowing air into a boiled duck, but gradually losing his sense of taste and his power to rule. The movie is more likable than memorable; you come out running for the nearest restaurant. In Mandarin.—A.L. (Village East Cinemas, Quad Cinema, and Plaza.)

Forrest Gump—As all the world now knows, Tom Hanks plays Forrest Gump, a simple Alabama soul who serves his country without hurting a fly; he saves his comrades in Vietnam, woos the dippy Jenny (Robin Wright), and runs back and forth across the continent. Hanks does his best to convince us that Gump is, in fact, a character and not merely a bulging sack of virtues, but the movie takes the fight out of him. With Sally Field and Gary Sinise. Directed by Robert Zemeckis.—A.L. (7/25/94) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex and 59th Street East Cinema.)

Heavenly Creatures—Peter Jackson's film tells the true story of a pair of New Zealand teen-agers, Pauline Parker (Melanie Lynskey) and Juliet Hulme (Kate Winslet), who murdered Pauline's mother, Honora (Sarah Peirse), in 1954. The girls have the sort of passionate friendship that unhappy adolescents are prone to: a union that begins with mutual infatuation and shared artistic interests but develops into an embattled us-against-the-world alliance. Although this is a fascinating story, the movie's style is so frenzied and hyperbolic that it tends to validate the heroines' warped perspective—to glamorize their art-fuelled contempt for ordinary people and everyday life. With the director tagging along faithfully behind Pauline and Juliet as if he were hoping to be invited into their sect, this folie à deux turns into a disastrous folie à trois. Screenplay by Jackson and Frances Walsh.—T.R. (11/21/94) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Hoop Dreams—An engrossing documentary about two inner-city Chicago teen-agers, William Gates and Arthur Agee, who aspire to careers in professional basketball. The filmmakers—Steve James, Frederick Marx, and Peter Gilbert—follow them all the way through high school. In the course of the movie's patient, sympathetic narrative (the running time is close to three hours), our reaction to the heroes' progress changes decisively, and for the better: at first we're assessing their chances, measuring them for N.B.A. uniforms; by the end we're rooting for them simply to survive the process without losing all their exuberance and drive and creative spirit.—T.R. (10/17/94) (Eastside Playhouse, Film Forum, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

I Like It Like That—It's macha versus macho in the Bronx, as a young mother of three (Lauren Vélez) takes an assistant's job at a record company to bail her husband (Jon Seda) out of jail, only to rouse gossip and jealousy in the barrio. Darnell Martin's enjoyably brash début movie has originality and feeling beneath the look-at-me theatrics. It's about the comedy and pathos of people taking on more responsibility than they can handle; the best moments come when the characters (and Martin) catch their breath and crack some jokes. There's riotous sexual vaudeville provided by Vélez and Seda, and by Jesse Borrego, Lisa Vidal, and Griffin Dunne.—M.S. (19th Street East 6, Manhattan Twin, and Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)

Interview with the Vampire—The film version of Anne Rice's immensely popular 1976 novel is less a horror movie than a luxurious reverie on horror-movie themes. The director, Neil Jordan, and his cinematographer, the great Philippe Rousselot, have given the movie an extraordinary seductive look, but Rice (who wrote the screenplay) doesn't provide enough narrative to keep the audience satisfied. Her vampires are so isolated from the world that there really isn't much for them to do except go on their nightly rounds and squabble—suck and bicker, suck and bicker, in scene after scene. Gorgeous as the picture is, the endless elaborations on the vampire story's obvious eroticism become very tiresome. This movie is convincing evidence that in popular genres subtext should stay where it belongs—underground. If it's brought into the light, it shrivels and dies. With Tom Cruise, Brad Pitt, Kirsten Dunst, Antonio Banderas, Stephen Rea, and Christian Slater.—T.R. (11/21/94) (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, Tower East, Orpheum VII, Ziegfeld, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

Junior—Arnold Schwarzenegger, pregnant. With Danny DeVito and Emma Thompson; directed by Ivan Reitman, and written by Chris Conrad and Kevin Wade. (First & 62nd Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, Regency, and National Twin.)

The Last Seduction—A star turn from Linda Fiorentino as Bridget, a woman with a frozen wasteland where her moral landscape should be. In New York, she cheats her husband (Bill Pullman) out of their illegal earnings; upstate, she cheats Mike (Peter Berg) out of everything but his life. The movie has a hard forties snap to it—lust is a weapon and love is a letdown. Directed by John Dahl ("Red Rock West").—A.L. (10/24/94) (Village Theatre VII and Paris.)

The Lion King—Disney's new animated feature is a coming-of-age story about animal royalty. It's "Bambi," but with carnivores. The hero, a young lion named Simba, is born to the purple, but before he can ascend to the throne he has to make cute friends, court a soft-eyed female of the species, and see his father die (in a scene that may actually jerk kids' tears more shamelessly than its counterpart in "Bambi"). Between traumas, the movie serves up soothingly banal musical numbers (composed by Elton John and Tim Rice) and silly, rambunctious comedy. The animation, computer-assisted in some of the more elaborate sequences, is sometimes impressive, but rarely impressive enough to overcome a certain impersonality—a stubborn mechanical coldness. Directed by Roger Allers and Rob Minkoff.—T.R. (6/20/94) (Village East Cinemas, Sutton, 23rd St. West Triplex, Guild, and Lincoln Square.)

Love & a .45—Gil Bellows, Renee Zellweger, and Rory Cochrane in a violent road movie set in

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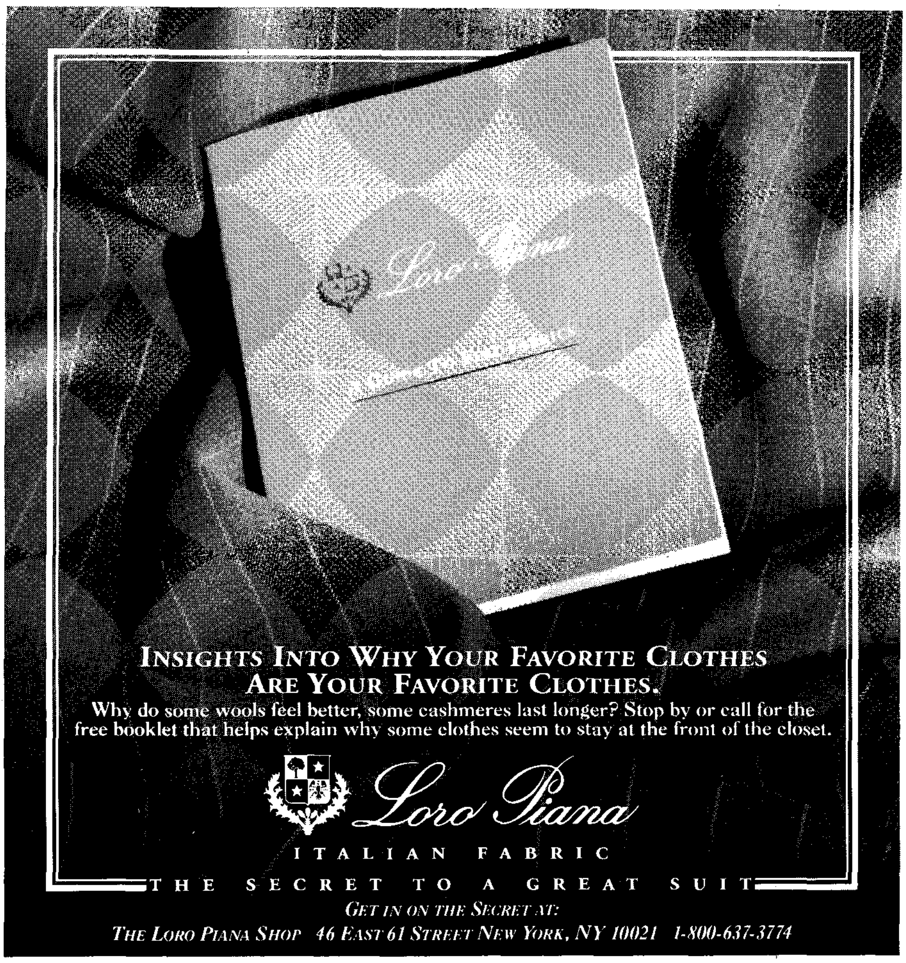
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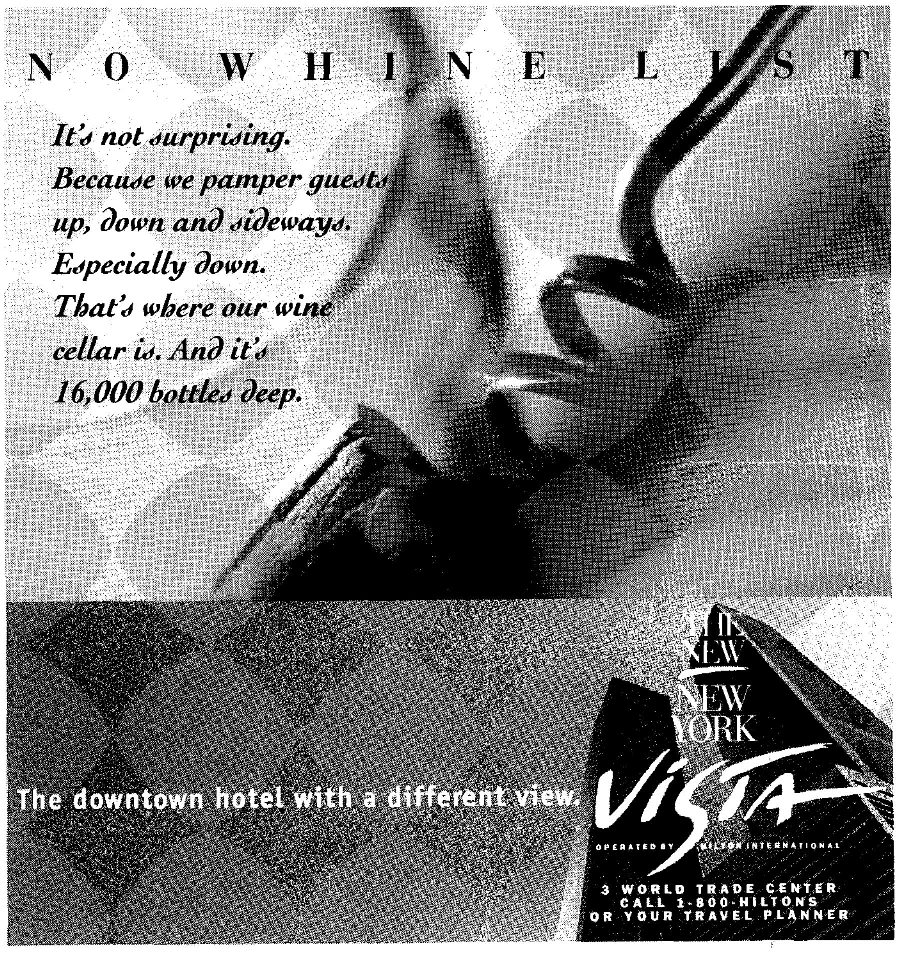
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CURRENT FILMS—Cont'd

Texas. Written and directed by C. M. Talkington. (19th Street East 6 and Lincoln Square.)

A Low Down Dirty Shame—Keenan Ivory Wayans stars in a private-eye picture that he also wrote and directed. (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, Cinema 3rd Avenue, 86th Street East Twin, 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy 1.)

Mary Shelley's Frankenstein—Kenneth Branagh as the young doctor with the big idea, Helena Bonham Carter as the love of his life, and Robert De Niro as the disgruntled creature who comes between them. Branagh, who also directed and co-produced, has transformed Shelley's cautionary tale into a restless farrago: schlock without horror. There are some potent sights here, like the bare-fleshed Frankenstein wrestling with his new creation, but the power is frittered away by a camera that refuses to calm down, and by performances that strain beyond earnestness without ever touching the heights of camp. (De Niro is more scarred than Boris Karloff, but also more sentimental.) The film won't let you have a good, messy time; it has more important things on its mind.—A.L. (11/14/94) (19th Street East 6, Gemini, and Criterion Center.)

Miracle on 34th Street—Richard Attenborough and Mara Wilson as Kris Kringle and Susan Walker, the roles made famous by Edmund Gwenn and Natalie Wood. With Elizabeth Perkins and Dylan McDermott. George Seaton (the writer and director of the 1947 version) and John Hughes collaborated on the script, and Les Mayfield directed. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 34th St. East, Gotham Cinema, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinemas, and Criterion Center.)

Mrs. Parker and the Vicious Circle—The Algonquin Round Table as envisioned by Alan Rudolph, with Jennifer Jason Leigh as Dorothy Parker, Campbell Scott as Robert Benchley, and Matthew Broderick as Charles MacArthur. Rudolph and Randy Sue Coburn wrote the script. (Angelika Film Center, Baronet, and Lincoln Square.)

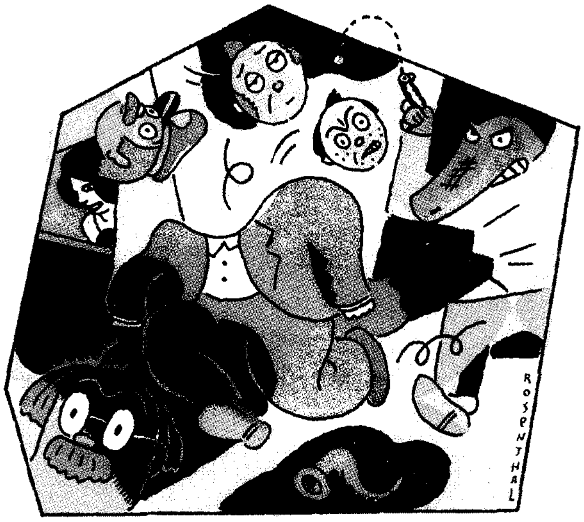
Natural Born Killers—"Bonnie and Clyde" in a blender. Oliver Stone uses fractured, blindingly fast editing to depict the warped consciousness of Mickey (Woody Harrelson) and Mallory (Juliette Lewis), a pair of young sociopaths in love. They're familiar types, and Stone's "ideas" about American violence turn out to be the same glib received notions that we've seen in countless other outlaw-couple movies. The oddest thing about this would-be satire is that, for all the gore and hysteria, the film doesn't feel particularly impassioned; it's a frivolous barrage.—T.R. (9/5/94) (Village East Cinemas and Worldwide Cinemas.)

Nostradamus—Roger Christian's historical drama about the sixteenth-century visionary features Amanda Plummer, Julia Ormond, Assumpta Serna, Rutger Hauer, F. Murray Abraham, and, in the title role, Tcheky Karyo. Written by Knut Boeser and Piers Ashworth. (Quad Cinema.)

Only You—Norman Jewison pulls together elements from "Roman Holiday," "Summertime," and "Cinderella," as well as his own "Moonstruck," and comes up with a negligible comedy about a jittery bride-to-be (Marisa Tomei) who jets from Pittsburgh to Italy in search of the true love prophesied by a Ouija board and a fortune-teller. Robert Downey, Jr., plays the American in Rome who may be her one and only. Diane Drake's script doesn't help an audience share Tomei's fantasy.—M.S. (First & 62nd Cinemas.)

The Pagemaster—Macaulay Culkin and Christopher Lloyd, along with the voices of Whoopi Goldberg, Leonard Nimoy, and Patrick Stewart, in a part live-action, part animated fantasy-adventure set in a library. (Village East Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Embassy.)

The Professional—The first American movie from Luc Besson, and it's even more absurd than his French ones. Léon (Jean Reno), a mob hit man living alone in Manhattan, befriends a precocious young girl (Natalie Portman), whose family has been wiped out by a twisted D.E.A. official (Gary Oldman) eager to finish what he started. The least objectionable thing about the movie is the violence—it's quick and funny. The most objectionable thing is Gary Oldman's performance, baroque in its awfulness. Almost as bad is the director's attempt to construct a visual style—and, for that matter, characters—by piling one mannerism on top of another. Thus Léon is presented as a lonely, sleepless, plant-tending, milk-drinking illiterate; what happened to the human being? For all his yearning to be hip, Besson is wedded to good taste. The love story between man and girl, which could have propelled the film toward outrage, stays mawkish and prim.—A.L. (Village Theatre VII, Murray Hill Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Astor Plaza.)



At the Film Forum, Maurizio Nichetti's "Stefano Quantestorie."

MARC ROSENTHAL

Pulp Fiction—In Quentin Tarantino's new picture, John Travolta, Samuel L. Jackson, Uma Thurman, Tim Roth, Harvey Keitel, Christopher Walken, and Bruce Willis parade through two and a half hours of complicated, cross-weaving Los Angeles plots, some of which are more gripping than others; the talk is dirty and funny, the violence always waiting just around the corner. It's a bright and startling picture, but the next day, it seems like a dream: the film attacks your senses and gives you almost nothing to remember it by, let alone to nourish you. It had to happen, and Tarantino is the man to deliver it: cinema as fast food.—A.L. (10/10/94) (Angelika Film Center, Murray Hill Cinemas, Beekman, East 85th Street, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy.)

Quiz Show—Robert Redford's movie is a speedy, absorbing chronicle of a trivial show-business scandal of the fifties: the rigging of big-money quiz shows. The screenplay, by Paul Attanasio, tries hard to sell some sweeping ideas about the class dynamics of American society, and doesn't quite succeed. The picture's real strength is its witty, vigorous evocation of the fifties media world. It hums along like a well-constructed farce, and its crazy momentum carries it over the bumps of social significance. Ralph Fiennes, John Turturro, and Rob Morrow have the largest roles, but they're outshone by the supporting players: Paul Scofield, Mira Sorvino, Christopher McDonald, Allan Rich, Hank Azaria, Barry Levinson, and—best of all—David Paymer.—T.R. (9/19/94) (Columbus Circle.)

Red—The last and best film in the trilogy that began with the baffling "Blue" and continued with the more acrid "White"; here all the skills of the director, Krzysztof Kieślowski, are brought into melancholy play. Blind chance or benign fate (according to your point of view) brings Valentine (Irène Jacob), a young model living alone in Geneva, into contact with a retired judge (Jean-Louis Trintignant) with a predilection for eavesdropping on telephone conversations. (It's the most authentic route he can find into the mysteries of human behavior.) In time Valentine's repulsion shades into curiosity, and from there into affection. And the movie itself shades from coldness and contrivance into a story as touching and mysterious as anything Kieślowski has ever made. Trintignant's performance as the misanthropic old man is a portrait of heartbreak, all the more convincing for his character's last-ditch efforts to mend other hearts. At the end, Kieślowski, too, assumes the mantle of Prospero, magically (and rather absurdly) assembling the trilogy's main players, and it's hard to begrudge the master his final flourish. In French.—A.L. (11/28/94) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Resistance—Two women, one (Helen Jones) returning to her hometown in Australia, the other (Lorna Lesley) a waitress there, come up against a violent militia. Directed by Paul Elliott and Hugh Keays-Byrne. (Angelika 57.)

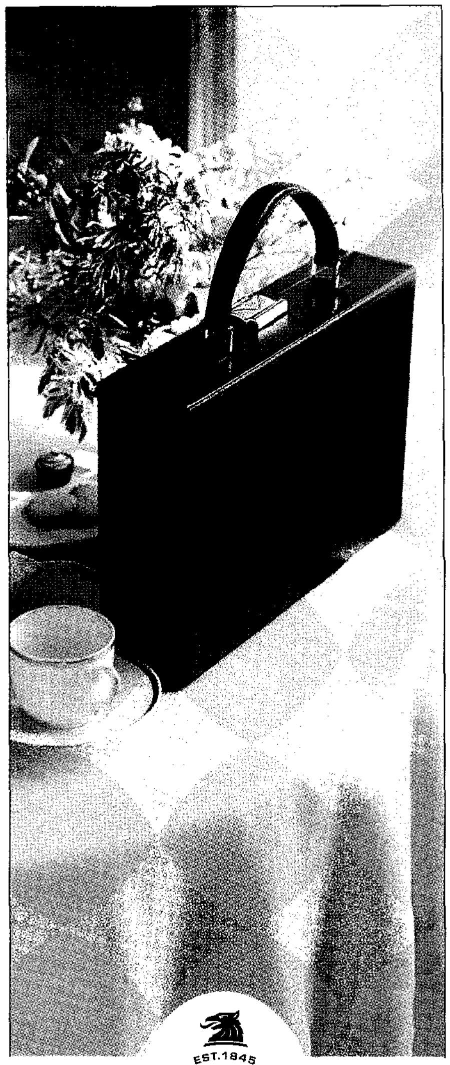
Sankofa—A model (Oyafunmike Ogunlano) on a photo shoot in West Africa is hurled back in time to the era of slavery, in a film written and directed by Haile Gerima. (Thalia.)

The Santa Clause—After Santa suffers a workplace accident, a divorced father (Tim Allen, of the TV sitcom "Home Improvement") has to prove himself to his son by stepping into the sleigh and delivering the presents himself. He has second thoughts when he finds his body shaking like a bowlful of jelly. Leo Benvenuti and Steve Rudnick wrote the script, and John Pasquin directed. (Village East Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, Sutton, 86th Street East Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy.)

The Shawshank Redemption—Tim Robbins returns to his best form with his haunted, cunning portrayal of Andy Dufresne, a young banker sentenced to life imprisonment in the nineteen-forties. Frank Darabont's movie never grabs at you, preferring to work patiently on your sympathies and nerves while finding time for casual jokes. What at first seems like a plotless tale of companionship—principally between Andy and a fixer named Red (Morgan Freeman)—tightens into excitement. The picture stays on track and leaves you, appropriately enough, with a surging sense of release.—A.L. (9/26/94) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Metro Cinema.)

The Specialist—Cheesecake meets beefcake as Sharon Stone persuades an ex-C.I.A. explosives ace (Sylvester Stallone) to wreak vengeance on Miami mobsters. Stallone's arch-enemy (James Woods, of course) heads security for these Cuban bad guys (led by Eric Roberts and Rod Steiger). The screenwriter, Alexandra Seros, gives every character a wit impediment. Steiger's accent prompts nervous laughter: "You bastard!" comes out "Jew bastard!" Luis Llosa directed.—M.S. (Manhattan Twin, Olympia, and Criterion Center.)

StarGate—Elementary sci-fi about a hieroglyphics expert (James Spader) and a U.S. military squad (led by Kurt Russell) who zip to a distant planet via the title portal, last used in ancient Egypt. They discover



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CURRENT FILMS—Cont'd

that Ra (Jaye Davidson), the sun god of the Pharaohs, is alive and well and a vicious alien. The intended audience seems to be ten-year-olds, who'll be dazed by the props and designs; Davidson is like a camp Disney witch. Directed by Roland Emmerich from a script by Emmerich, and Dean Devlin.—M.S. (34th Street Showplace, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Star Trek Generations—The old crew's campiness, epitomized by William Shatner, and the next generation's earnest thespianism, epitomized by Patrick Stewart; a plot about "a conflux of temporal energy"; laugh lines like "The emotion chip has overloaded my positronic relay"; sermons about emotion and escapism; busty, snaggletoothed Klingon babes; repeated jolts that hurl crew members out of their seats and imply that even in the future you'll need air bags. This seventh big-screen "Star Trek" is clumsy and bloated, but viewed as a cosmic variety show, it has a certain grapeshot charm. David Carson directed.—M.S. (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Olympia, and Criterion Center.)

Stefano Quantestorie—Maurizio Nichetti ("The Icicle Thief," "Volere Volare") takes on six different roles in a madcap comedy that he also co-wrote (with Laura Fischetto) and directed. In Italian. (Film Forum.)

The Swan Princess—An animated version of the Swan Lake legend, directed by Richard Rich and featuring the voices of John Cleese, Jack Palance, Steven Wright, and Sandy Duncan, as well as eight new songs by Lex de Azevedo and David Zippel. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Cinema II, Orpheum VII, Lincoln Square, and Criterion Center.)

To Live—The epic of suffering is the fashion in new Chinese cinema, but whether the authorities will develop a taste for it is another matter. They certainly got heavy with the director Zhang Yimou after seeing this new movie; he will not be attending festivals abroad for some time. An odd reaction, really, for this is not his most provocative work—its assault on the Maoist programs of the fifties and sixties is secondary to its *gentle, observant picture of a family's travails*. The father (Ge You) is a gambler and—you guessed it—a puppetmaster; while he stumbles around in the war between the Communists and the Nationalists, the mother (Gong Li) is left at home raising their children. He returns, and then their troubles really begin. The ornate intensity of Zhang's earlier work has relaxed, and there are scenes here—family meals, for instance—that move with the simplicity of a Rossellini picture. But the sheer mass of narrative hurries things on. You keep waiting for Zhang, the impeccable stylist, to stop and stare. In Mandarin.—A.L. (11/28/94) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

An Unforgettable Summer—Lucian Pintilie's new movie—his first since the triumph of "The Oak," in 1993, and just as weird—is set in southeastern Romania in 1925. An army captain (Claudiu Bleont) and his loving wife (Kristin Scott-Thomas) have been exiled to a barren, beautiful outpost, where they survive on limp salads and live in fear of brigands. It's hard to tell who is more difficult and determined: Scott-Thomas, who belies her frail features and lace dresses with a startling portrait of a troublemaker, or Pintilie himself, who marks out the plot in a series of clearly lit, unnerving scenes. Too much of a surrealist for political satire, too earthy to be a dreamer, he sneaks past your defenses like the young Taviani brothers and explodes his images in style. In Romanian.—A.L. (11/14/94) (Quad Cinema and Cinema 3.)

Vanya on 42nd Street—Louis Malle's astonishingly beautiful film documents a stage production, directed by André Gregory, of Chekhov's "Uncle Vanya." The conceit is that the actors—wearing street clothes and clutching take-out coffee—have gathered for a run-through; as it goes along, our sense of the theatrical reality gives way to the more intimate feeling of belief that movies create. The style of the movie seems, finally, to merge with the play itself: nothing appears to be happening, yet everything is transformed. With Wallace Shawn, as Vanya, and Julianne Moore, as Yelena; also with Brooke Smith, Larry Pine, and George Gaynes. The superb adaptation is by David Mamet.—T.R. (10/31/94) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

The War—Rural Mississippi, circa 1970. Dad (Kevin Costner), a traumatized Vietnam vet, is having a tough time staying employed and communicating with Mom (Mare Winningham). Their daughter (Lexi Randall) and son (Elijah Wood) build a tree house and wage turf wars against a family of bullies. It's hard to know what's worse, the trumped-up collisions or the drawling rhetoric of healing that follows them. ("I think the only thing that truly keeps people safe and happy is love. And in the absence of love, there's nothing in this world worth fightin' for.") Kathy McWhorter wrote the script; Jon Avnet directed.—M.S. (Coronet, Art Greenwich Twin, 23rd St. West Triplex, 62nd & Broadway, and National Twin.)

THEATRE ADDRESSES

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EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000).
Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171).
Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th (477-6600).
Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th (982-0400).
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th (924-3363).
Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th (529-6799).
19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th (260-8000).
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th (689-6548).
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th (532-5544).
34th St. East, 241 E. 34th (683-0255).
Eastside Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 55th (755-3020).
Sutton I and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th (759-1411).
Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th (759-2262).
Plaza, 42 E. 58th (355-3320).
Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th (935-6420).
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th (759-4630).
Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th (355-1663).
Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th (753-6022).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd (513-5408).
Gemini I and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th (832-1670).
Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th (737-2622).
New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th (744-7339).
68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th (734-0302).
Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st (879-1313).
East 85th Street, 1st Ave. at 85th (249-5100).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th (534-1880).
Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th (876-2400).
86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th (249-1144).

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110).
Waverly I and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd (929-8037).
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th (929-3350).
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th (255-8800).
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd (513-5402).
23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd (989-0060).
Guild, 33 W. 50th (757-2406).
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583).
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th (765-7600).
57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th (581-7360).
Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th (265-2520).
Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th (586-1900).
Paris, 4 W. 58th (980-5656).
Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th (752-5959).
Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st (247-5070).
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd (265-7466).
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, B'way at 63rd (757-2280).
Regency, B'way at 67th (724-3700).
Lincoln Square, B'way at 68th (336-5000)
84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th (877-3600).
Thalia, B'way at 95th (316-4962)
Metro Cinema I and 2, B'way at 99th (222-1200).
Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th (865-8128).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th (354-0900).
Embassy I, B'way at 46th (302-0494).
Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th (730-7262).
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way (869-8340).
National Twin, B'way at 44th (869-0950).

REVIVALS

(The following notes are by Arlene Croce, Pauline Kael, and Michael Sragow. Theatre addresses and phone numbers appear with the late-run listings following these notes.)

The Exorcist (1973)—The demonic possession of a child, treated with shallow seriousness. The picture is designed to scare people, and it does so by mechanical means: levitations, swivelling heads, vomit being spewed in people's faces. A viewer can become glumly anesthetized by the brackish color and the senseless ugliness of the conception. Neither the producer-writer, William Peter Blatty, nor the director, William Friedkin, shows any feeling for the little girl's helplessness and suffering, or for her mother's. It would be sheer insanity to take children. With Linda Blair, Ellen Burstyn, Max von Sydow, and Jason Miller. A huge box-office success.—P.K. (American Museum of the Moving Image; Dec. 4.)

George Balanchine's The Nutcracker (1993)—Not recommended for people who are not dance students, have no intention of seeing Balanchine's production on the stage, or have no patience with the idea that every utterance of live theatre, whether spoken, sung, danced, or mimed in subway tunnels, should somehow find its way onto film. With Darci Kistler, Kyra Nichol, and Macaulay Culkin.—A.C. (Reviewed under Dancing 12/27/93-1/3/94) (Walter Reade Theatre; Dec. 3-4.)

The Lost Weekend (1945)—Charles Jackson's novel about a well-brought-up, frustrated, dipsomaniacal writer who goes on a five-day binge that lands him in Bellevue was turned into an unusually daring popular melodrama by the writing team of Charles Brackett (who produced) and Billy Wilder (who directed). As the star, Ray Milland, reprieved from his usual lightweight leading-man roles, surprised the public with his tautness and irony. The picture lacks fluidity, and the slowly paced scenes seem overcalculated, with each colorful character and tense vignette standing out too sharply; everything is nailed down to a meaning for us. The whole thing is short on imaginative resonance; what it has is the Brackett-and-Wilder specialty—a distinctive cruel (and sometimes cruelly funny) edge. And there are some famous sequences: the hero's lust for a drink during "Libiamo," the opening aria of "La Traviata"; his long, plodding walk along Third Avenue in an attempt to hawk his typewriter when the pawnshops are closed for Yom Kippur. With Frank Faylen, Howard da Silva, Jane Wyman, Doris Dowling, Phillip Terry, Clarence Muse, and Lillian Fontaine. Filmed partly on locations in New York, such as Bellevue.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Dec. 4-5.)

Phantom Lady (1944)—The mood and pacing lift this low-budget thriller out of its class, but the ideas, the dialogue, and the ending that the studio insisted on prevent it from being a first-rate B-picture. Ella Raines is the girl in danger, Franchot Tone is the psychopathic killer, Alan Curtis is the man wrongly convicted of murder, Thomas Gomez is the police inspector, and Elisha Cook, Jr., is the drummer in the jam session that is the film's high point of excitement. Robert Siodmak directed.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Dec. 1. . . . ¶ Museum of Modern Art; Dec. 6.)

Rear Window (1954)—This masterpiece of urban voyeurism satirizes cramped city life.

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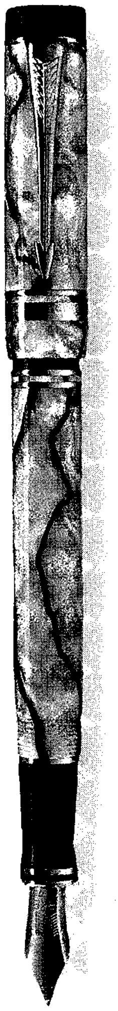

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THE windswept moors have never looked windier than they do in the latest remake of "Wuthering Heights" (TNT, premièring December 5), filmed on location in the godforsaken hills of Yorkshire, England. The trees are bent at freakish angles, stripped of leaves, as actors clamp their hands on their heads, trying to keep from blowing away. Unlike William Wyler's 1939 film, which starred Merle Oberon and Laurence Olivier's magnificent chin, this version, directed by Peter Kosminsky, covers the entire novel, which means there's a lot more wind and rain. Ralph Fiennes, on a roll from "Schindler's List" and "Quiz Show," is Heathcliff; sorely misused as a child, he has turned into a tyrannical adult, ardent, haughty, and cruel. Casting against type, the producers chose the French actress Juliette Binoche ("The Unbearable Lightness of Being") to essay the quintessentially English role of Cathy. It was not a shrewd pick. Binoche has a simpering, chattering manner, which borders on mad hysteria. Although this "Wuthering Heights" is more explicit than Wyler's film in its incest overtones, it has none of its romance-novel lift. Emily Brontë's torn-asunder poetry is reduced to clinical pathology.

Woody Allen retraces his own steps in "Don't Drink the Water" (ABC, December 18). Based on his stage play, this Cold War comedy of errors, about a family holed up in a United States embassy in "Vulgaria," was made into a bad film in the sixties. In this version, which Allen directed, he wears the plaid shirt in the role of the tasteless boob who doesn't know how to behave abroad. The cast also includes Julie Kavner, Michael J. Fox, Dom DeLuise, and "Blossom" 's Mayim Bialik (who's quite good). The play was the sort of Neil Simon–Sid Caesar skit that Allen abandoned once Ingmar Bergman lifted his staff and said, "Follow me, Woodman—I shall lead you to the abyss." This remake is a weird shotgun marriage of Broadway corn and arty cinéma-vérité absurdism. All that visual jazz, coupled with the non-stop jabber of the script (it's one of those movie where no one stops yelling), makes for an exhausting trial. Yet it's a true curiosity. You watch it, transfixed, wondering: Why is Woody playing in a sand box that he's long since outgrown?

—JAMES WOLCOTT

It's set mainly in a Greenwich Village apartment with a view into the rooms across the courtyard. James Stewart plays a temporarily wheelchair-bound photojournalist who uses his camera as a telescope to spy on his neighbors, including a travelling salesman (Raymond Burr) who may have killed his invalid wife. It's one of Alfred Hitchcock's inspired audience-participation films: watching it, you feel titillated, horrified, then purged—and always entertained. John Michael Hayes based his screenplay on a Cornell Woolrich story. With Grace Kelly as Stewart's gal and Thelma Ritter as his nurse.—M.S. (Film Forum 2; Dec. 4-5.)

THE THIEF OF PARIS (1967)—Jean-Paul Belmondo in Louis Malle's slow-paced, romanticized view of the state of mind of a nihilist thief in late-nineteenth-century France. This thief hates the bourgeoisie, yet is so successful he becomes part of it. Malle shows none of the seaminess of thievery; this is a study of compulsion, and though it's well shot by Henri Decaë, it lacks substance and is tedious. Screenplay by Malle and Jean-Claude Carrière, with dialogue by Daniel Boulanger; based on a novel by Georges Darien. In French.—P.K. (Symphony Space; Dec. 6.)

UNDER THE ROOFS OF PARIS (1930)—Rene Clair's first sound film was one of the first imaginative approaches to the musical as a film form. Clair keeps dialogue to a minimum and uses music and sound effects to create a carefree, poetic style. More lyric, less comic than his other films of this period, "Under the Roofs" isn't the fun that his 1931 "Le Million" is; it may be a little too pure, too "cinematic." It tells the story of two inseparable friends and the girl they both love. In French.—P.K. (*Symphony Space; Dec. 6.*)

LATE RUNS, CLASSICS, ETC.

WORLDWIDE CINEMAS, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)—"Natural Born Killers" (†). . . . "True Lies" (James Cameron). . . . "Clear and Present Danger" (Phillip Noyce). . . . "The Mask" (Chuck Russell). . . . "Speed" (Jan De Bont). . . . "Corrina, Corrina" (Jessie Nelson). . . . "Lassie" (Daniel Petrie).

FILM FORUM 2 AND 3, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)—**THEATRE 2:** Nov. 30: "Cry Terror!" (1958, Andrew Stone) and "The Tattooed Stranger" (1950, Edward J. Montagne). . . . ¶ Dec. 1: "Phantom Lady" (†); and "Lady on a Train" (1945, Charles David). . . . ¶ Dec. 2-3: "The Wrong Man" (1956, Alfred Hitchcock) and "The Window" (1949, Ted Tetzlaff). . . . ¶ Dec. 4-5: "Rear Window" (†) and "The Lost Weekend" (†). . . . ¶ From Dec. 6: "I Wake Up Screaming" (1942, H. Bruce Humberstone) and "Sorry, Wrong Number" (1948, Anatole Litvak). . . . **THEATRE 3:** "Dr. Strangelove, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb" (1964, Stanley Kubrick).

LITTLE THEATRE, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-1717)—"Against the Odds: BBC Drama, 1975-1994." Nov. 30-Dec. 1 at 7: "Family, Part 1" (1994, Michael Winterbottom). . . . Nov. 30-Dec. 1 at 9:15: "Family, Part 2.". . . Dec. 2-4 at 2: "Silas Marner" (1985, Giles Foster). . . . Dec. 2-4 at 4: "First and Last" (1989, Alan Dosser). . . . Dec. 2-4 and Dec. 6 at 7: "Sweet As You Are" (1988, Angela Pope) and "Safe" (1993, Antonio Bird). . . . Dec. 2-4 at 9:30: "The Cormorant" (1992, Peter Markham). . . . Dec. 5 at 7: "Tutti Frutti, Part 2" (1987, Tony Smith). . . . Dec. 6 at 9:30: "Tumbledown" (1988, Richard Eyre).

CINEMA VILLAGE, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363)—Through Dec. 6: A program of thirty-two films shown under the umbrella title "Contemporary Films of the African Diaspora Festival."

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Dec. 1 at 3 and 6: "A Day in the Warsaw Ghetto" (1992, Jack Kuper) and "Art and Remembrance: The Legacy of Felix Nussbaum" (1993, Barbara Pfeffer). . . . ¶ Dec. 2 at 2:30: Four short films by Denys Arcand, 1962-67. . . . ¶ Dec. 2 at 6: "Comfort and Indifference" (1981, Arcand). . . . ¶ A program of experimental video documentaries by Marlon Riggs. Dec. 2 at 3 and Dec. 3 at 5: "Color Adjustment" (1991). . . . Dec. 2 at 7 and Dec. 4 at 2:30: "Anthem" (1991), "Ethnic Notions" (1986), and "Black Is . . . Black Ain't" (1994). . . . Dec. 3 at 2:30 and Dec. 4 at 5: "Affirmations" (1990) and "Tongues Untied" (1989). . . . ¶ Dec. 2 at 8:15 and Dec. 3 at 5: "Youth on Parade" (1942, Albert S. Rogell). . . . ¶ Dec. 3 at 2 and Dec. 5 at 6: "Funny Girl" (1968, William Wyler). . . . ¶ Dec. 4 at 2: "Foreign Correspondent" (1940, Alfred Hitchcock). . . . ¶ Dec. 4 at 5 and Dec. 5 at 2:30: "Gypsy" (1962, Mervyn LeRoy). . . . ¶ Dec. 6 at 3: Two short films by Lindsay Anderson—"Thursday's Children" (1964) and "Every Day Except Christmas" (1957). . . . ¶ Dec. 6 at 6: "Phantom Lady" (†).

WALTER READE THEATRE, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—Nov. 30 at 2, 3:45, 6, and 8:30: Four films from Germany. . . . ¶ Dec. 1 at 2, 6, and 10: "Blue" (1993, Derek Jarman). . . . ¶ Dec. 1 at 4 and 8: "The Last of England" (1987, Jarman). . . . ¶ From Dec. 2: A program of new Spanish films. . . . ¶ Dec. 3-4 at 2: "George Balanchine's The Nutcracker" (†).

WHITNEY MUSEUM, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—A program of films and videos by, or about, black American males. Nov. 30 at noon: "In Search of Our Fathers" (1992, Marco Williams). . . . Nov. 30 at 3:30 and Dec. 1 at 2: "Surviving the Odds: To Be a Young Black Man in America" (1994). . . . Dec. 1 at 5:30 and Dec. 2 at noon: "After Winter: Sterling Brown" (1985, Haile Gerima) and "In Motion: Amiri Baraka" (1982, St. Clair Bourne). . . . Dec. 2 at 3:30 and Dec. 3 at noon: "Miles of Smiles, Years of Struggle" (1983) and "Eyes on the Prize, Part II: The Time Has Come, 1964-66" (1990). . . . Dec. 3 at 3:30 and Dec. 4 at noon: "Passing Through" (1977, Larry Clark). . . . Dec. 4 at 3:30: "Go Tell It on the Mountain" (1984).

A DIFFERENT LIGHT BOOKSTORE, 151 W. 19th St. (989-4850)—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On Dec. 4 at 7, the feature will be "The Singing Nun" (1966, Henry Koster), with Debbie Reynolds.

FLORENCE GOULD HALL, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Dec. 6 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Germinal" (1994, Claude Berri; in French).

SYMPHONY SPACE, B'way at 95th St. (864-5400)—Dec. 6 at 7: "The Thief of Paris" (†). . . . ¶ Dec. 6 at 9:15: "Under the Roofs of Paris" (†).

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—Dec. 4 at 2: "Heaven Help Us" (1985, Michael Dinner). . . . ¶ Dec. 4 at 4:30: "The Exorcist" (†).

JAPAN SOCIETY, 333 E. 47th St. (752-0824)—Dec. 2 at 6:30: "800 Two Lap Runners" (1994, Ryuichi Hiroki; in Japanese). . . . ¶ Dec. 6 at 6:30: Stravinsky's "Oedipus Rex" (1992, Julie Taymor), in a staging inspired by Japanese theatre and dance; featuring soprano Jessye Norman, tenor Philip Langridge, and baritone Bryn Terfel, *with Seiji Ozawa conducting the Saito Kinen* Orchestra and two Japanese choruses.

BROOKLYN MUSEUM, 200 Eastern Parkway. (1-718 638-5000)—"Reel-to-Reel Harmony: Great Classical Voices on Film," the Museum's festival of films that feature operatic luminaries, continues with a daylong soprano-fest on Dec. 3. At 2 and 7: Eleanor Steber in recital, Victoria de los Angeles in Act I of "La Traviata" (1956), and Beverly Sills in excerpts from "Roberto Devereux." . . . At 4:30: Maria Callas in "Medea" (1969, Pier Paolo Pasolini).

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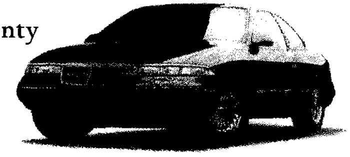

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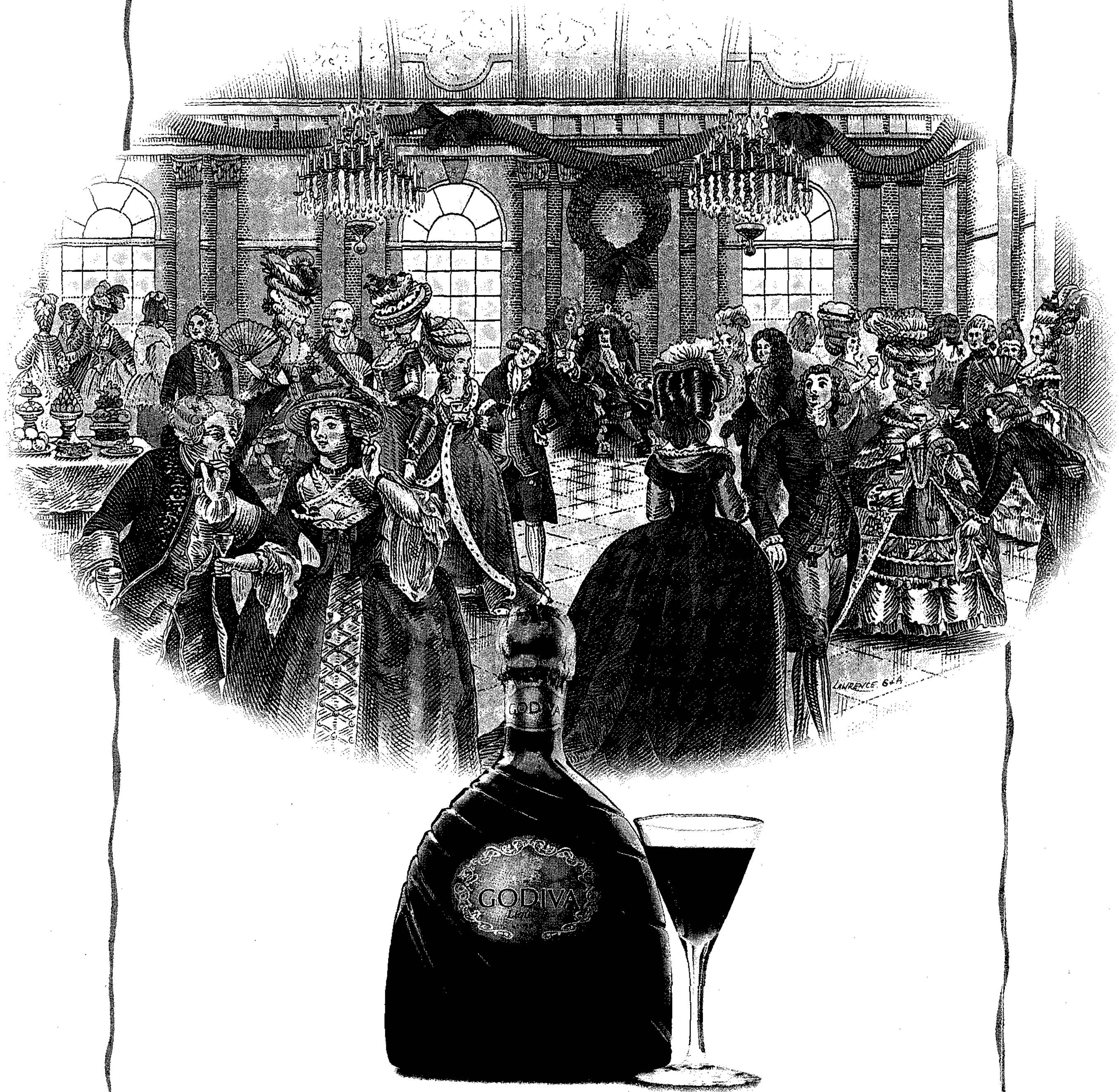

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THE
NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

A NIGHT AT THE MET

It was during a "Rigoletto," with the richly warbling Sumi Jo as Gilda. Suddenly, in the middle of the third-act quartet that follows "La donna è mobile," a shadowed figure was seen scurrying up the Met's central aisle. A minute later, the smell of smoke tinged with sulfur crept in and began to intensify. A low mumble grew in the audience, blending with the voices of Gilda and the Duke, eventually overpowering them, and then, all at once, a mass decision was made, and three thousand-odd people rose from their seats and fled. Once safely outdoors, operagoers giggled and gossiped, glancing back nervously at the cavernous red foyer as if expecting the entire Met to go up in a ball of flame. "Is it a bomb?" one woman asked. Those courageous enough to wait inside the lobby heard a technician announce unconvincingly that "it may be a problem with ammonia in the air-conditioning."

A Mr. Morton Elkind, of Brooklyn, used the occasion to reminisce. "This reminds me of the 'Gioconda' a few years ago when Placido Domingo dropped out after the first act," he said. "Carlo Bini was in the audience and agreed to take his place. But at the moment when he was supposed to embrace the lady and put his hands on her waist he got confused and put them on her breasts, and everyone in the audience began to howl. He stopped singing, turned to the audience, and said—just like this—'Donta laugha atta me. I'm a-doin' the besta I can.' And everyone went wild laughing, and fights broke out. Old ladies in evening gowns were hitting men in dinner jackets with their handbags." Mr. Elkind paused. "Now this—this is nothing like that." And then a stage manager appeared in the lobby and announced that the problem was burning rubber on a backstage projector, and many hardy souls returned to their seats, determined to see the drama to its end.

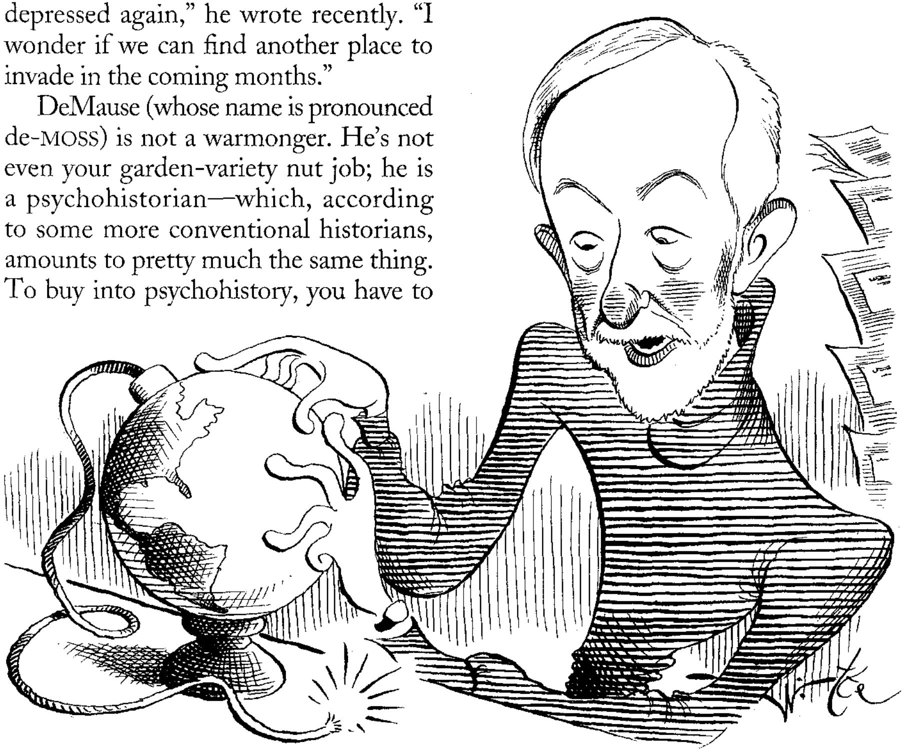
ILLUSTRATIONS BY MICHAEL WITTE

BAD MOMMIES AND OTHER OMENS

Lloyd deMause is expecting a war. His index of leading indicators—editorial cartoons, magazine covers, Op-Ed pieces, newspaper headlines—has been telling him that some blowout is right around the corner, and for a while he thought that Haiti might be it. But instead of a proper incursion America opted for Operation Uphold Democracy, which was not precisely what deMause had in mind. "Now that few of our boys will be sacrificed, I suspect we will feel depressed again," he wrote recently. "I wonder if we can find another place to invade in the coming months."

DeMause (whose name is pronounced de-MOSS) is not a warmonger. He's not even your garden-variety nut job; he is a psychohistorian—which, according to some more conventional historians, amounts to pretty much the same thing. To buy into psychohistory, you have to subscribe to some fairly woolly assumptions—you have to agree that there are hidden messages embedded in our leaders' speeches, for instance, and that a nation's child-rearing techniques affect its foreign policy. Yet deMause's analyses have often proved weirdly prescient. He predicted the defeat of Jimmy Carter, and the attempted assassination of Ronald Reagan. He predicted what eventually became the Gulf War. "I don't want to focus on prediction," he says. "But I do think that a good scientist—if psychohistory is a science—should try to predict. Psychohistory is empirical. It's based on the scientific methods of psychology."

DeMause is sixty-three years old and slightly stooped; he has gray hair and a gray beard and a long, goatish face, and his eyes glisten. When he talks, he keeps his elbows close to his sides, so that his



awkward, emphatic gestures seem to shoot right out of his rib cage. He has written six books, all of which he has had to publish himself. Most of his articles show up in *The Journal of Psychohistory*, which he edits and publishes himself, too. For nearly four decades, he has been promulgating the gospel of psychohistory, and for nearly four decades he has met with disparagement and scorn. His forthcoming book, "The Emotional Lives of Nations," was, he says, "sent around by an agent—and they were all afraid of it." He looks oddly cheery about the whole thing.

So who's afraid of deMause, and why? Psychohistory, according to its chief practitioner, asserts that nations have psychologies, just as individuals do; they have dreams and fantasies that can be analyzed; they have urges that arise from the childhood fears and traumas of their populace. "If you're a psychoanalyst," deMause says, "and a patient comes in twenty days in a row and has dreams that his wife falls off a cliff, you want to ask him, 'Do you have a death wish toward her?' Well, so, too, if you see death wishes expressed toward Reagan, and you see them rather consistently, then you think, Well, maybe there is a wish like that out there." The way deMause parses the national dreamwork is by obsessively scrutinizing the media—"particularly visual material, since dreams are mainly visual," he says. "So I take all the cartoons and magazine covers, and when I see covers with a lot of kids with guns I forget about whether there really are or are not guns in schools—the sense of the country is that kids are dangerous. These things pour into my office. We're a sort of monitoring center of national dream life."

LIKE certain more prominent historians, deMause thinks that American history runs in cycles—except that deMause's cycles proceed from what he calls Group-Fantasies. There have been about five full turns of the wheel, he thinks, since the dawn of the republic, and, since the nineteen-forties, each one has been faster than the last. They all begin with what deMause has designated an Innovative Period: social experimentation, liberalism, invention, "less scapegoating of women and minorities." Naturally, members of the ruling establishment—what deMause calls "the older psychoclasses"—don't take very kindly to all this trailblazing. "They feel, Oh my God, I can't beat my wife anymore! What *is* this?" deMause says. "Women are getting votes? Social relations are changing? Homosexuals coming out of the closet? Terrible, terrible!"

So the euphoria ends; purse strings tighten; public confidence staggers. "And that mood lasts for a little while and you have an actual Depression," deMause says. "Then you come out of the Depression and you have a Manic Period, in which you start doing manic things domestically and you start expanding abroad—sending troops to Vietnam and places like that and getting very paranoid of enemies coming up."

And after that? "You have a war—or generally two wars."

Hmm. So if the efflorescence of the late sixties and early seventies was our most recent Innovative Period, and the recession of the early eighties was our most recent Depression, and the manic period of the late eighties was our Manic Period, it's about time for—What did he say? Two wars?

"The Gulf War was in 1991—O.K.?" deMause explains. "Now we're back at the Manic Period again, and my guess is that we're going up to another war. The Gulf War was short. It didn't get our anxieties off. We really were quite disappointed that it ended early, and we threw Bush out because of it—he became a wimp again. And now we're getting all this still very regressed material—you can just see all this very, very violent stuff."

He brandishes a folder full of Xeroxes and clippings. Everywhere you look you see images of tiny men and threatening, monstrous women—Lorena Bobbitt with knife, Hillary Clinton with gun, Hillary Clinton with Lorena Bobbitt's knife, Bill Clinton cowering. "We had all this sort of thing right before the Gulf War, too," he says. "And then, when the war began, these images ended. There were no more. The bad, horrible, child-abusing-mommy image got shifted to the enemy." He stabs a finger at cartoons of Saddam Hussein pregnant (with nukes), Saddam Hussein dandling children who are bound and gagged. "That's what's fascinating. It's always 'We're going too far, there's too much sex, we gotta clamp down, we gotta—' The id gets out of control. And the superego, which is Mommy, is gonna come and punish us. And eventually, we say, 'Let's inflict it on somebody else.' That's what a sacrifice is. In ancient times, they would say, 'It's time to go to war now, because it's time to sacrifice people. Because the goddess is angry.' "

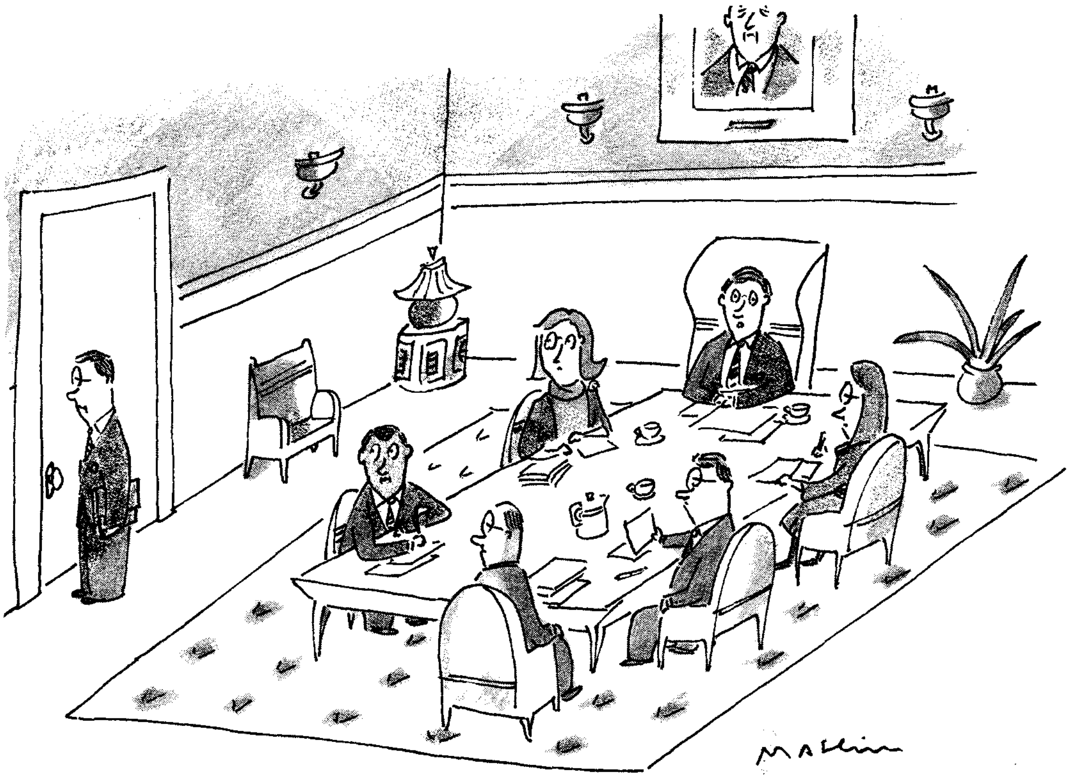
Apparently, she's still angry. One wonders, for instance, whether the Susan Smith case would have ignited quite such a hullabaloo were we not in the throes of a new deMausian Manic Period. But does that really mean that another war is around the corner? DeMause thinks so. These days, his folders bulge with "bad mommies and monsters. Which I see as placentas," he says. "Believe it or not."

A REPUBLICAN RENAISSANCE MAN

STUART STEVENS is gloating a bit these days, but in a subdued, genteel sort of way. His first novel, "Scorched Earth," an insider's farcical account of the last six days of a brutal Southern senate race, has just been published by the Atlantic Monthly Press. In addition, fourteen Republican clients of Stevens' political-advertising firm, the Stuart Stevens Group, won their campaigns earlier this month. In a post-election "scorecard" rating political consultants, *Time* gave Stevens a batting average of 1.000. "All my ponies came home" is how he puts it.

Stuart Stevens doesn't like labels, but that isn't a problem, because no single label fits him. He is a Southerner and also a New Yorker, a novelist and a travel memoirist who also writes for television shows ("Northern Exposure," "I'll Fly Away"), and a political consultant who hates Washington. He is a zealous Republican but not an ideologue; a successful businessman who prefers to run with the literary set.

One morning recently, Stevens took a break from work and sat down over a large cappuccino at his company's offices, in Chelsea, to shed some light on exactly who he is. Not surprisingly, his appearance presents another contradiction: he dresses like a Clinton Democrat, in bluejeans and running shoes. Stevens, whose chiselled face bears a hearty resemblance to Charlton Heston's, grew up in Jackson, Mississippi, a town of writers and, at the time, yellow-dog Democrats. He's not one of those expatriate Southerners who treat their accents like the good china—something to be dusted off and presented with a flourish on special occasions. Rather, he has a subtle but unrelenting drawl, so when he says he was Eudora Welty's paperboy for a time you can sort of see it. He left Jackson in 1970, taking with him the city's creative impulse but, he said, leaving its politics behind, because of the Southern Democrats' opposition to civil rights. He and his closest friends "kind of said we were Republicans," he added, "but we weren't sure what that meant." When one of those friends ran for Congress in 1978, Stevens, just out of U.C.L.A. film school, was drafted to make commercials for the campaign. The candidate won, Stevens recounted, and "then I found out people would actually pay me to make commercials."



"Excuse me, ladies and gentlemen. But when you see a lawyer standing like that at a door it usually means he wants to go out."

This year, Stevens took on sixteen clients. Two lost in primaries, but all those who made it into the general election also made it into office, including favorites like Massachusetts' Governor William Weld and Indiana's Senator Richard Lugar, and some underdogs, like Tom Ridge, the governor-elect of Pennsylvania. Naturally, Stevens' success has attracted the attention of several Republican Presidential hopefuls, but, he said, "you never do those things capriciously. I think it would depend on good chemistry."

Before heading out to peruse the travel section of a local bookstore, Stevens took a few moments to run a videotape of his commercials. He is particularly proud of an ad for the Ridge campaign, entitled, simply, "Jan." A young woman tells the camera that the sixteen-year-old who raped her is now free, because of lenient juvenile-crime laws in Pennsylvania. Had Ridge been governor when the crime occurred, the woman goes on to say, the offender would still be in jail. Stevens employs that technique often in his ads: a real person—not a politician—tells a real story, with no prepared script. "People want realness. They want something they can believe," he said, revealing, perhaps, the connection between fiction and political campaigns: if you convince, you succeed.

AMERICAN CHIC

SINCE Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis's death, this spring, many tributes have remarked on her sartorial élan. As a result, "Jackie" has become an unqualified fashion noun, meaning a woman who exemplifies chic, breezy American style—mainly the Jackie of the Ron Galella paparazzi shots, some of which show Jackie walking along Fifth Avenue in trenchcoat, slacks, and flats, with loose, windblown hair. The feature that designers like Isaac Mizrahi (in his "Resort" collection for '94) and Christian Roth have picked up on as iconographic Jackie is her sunglasses—the very large, round ones that were so much a part of her over-all look in the sixties and seventies that it was sometimes startling to see her in a photograph without them.

On Madison Avenue the other day, no fewer than three women were spotted in slacks, trenchcoats, and oversized sunglasses. One woman was hailing a cab. As she did so, she removed a scarf from her head. Her dark hair fell loosely around her shoulders and began to blow in the wind.

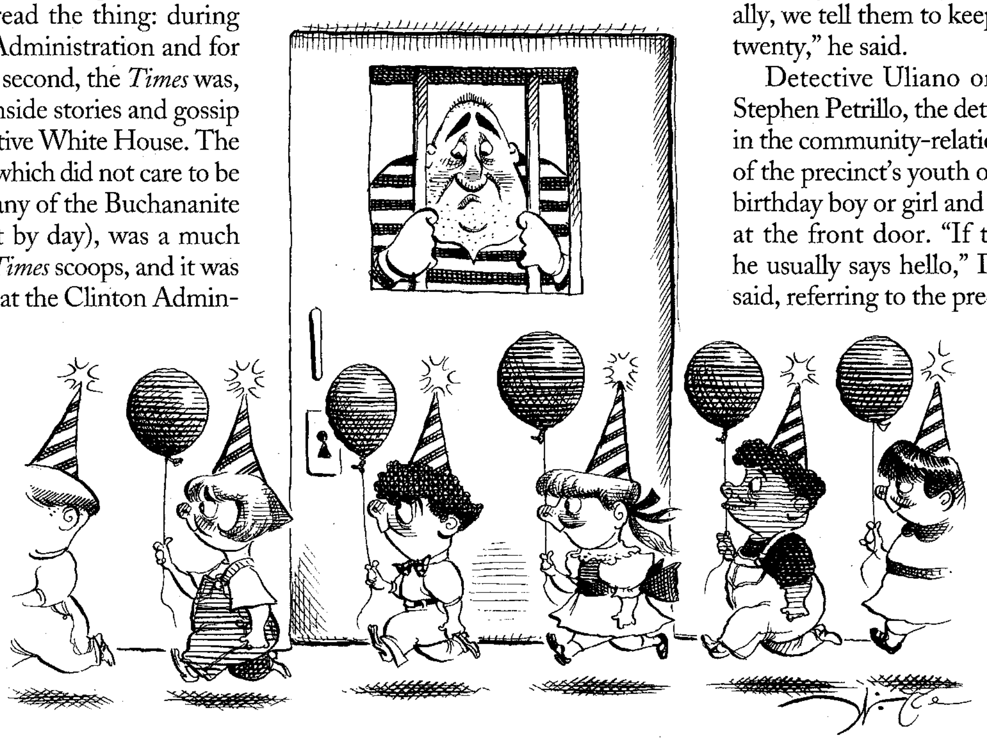
IT'S TIME FOR THE OTHER *TIMES*

THERE is a great deal about the recent elections that the Washington press-and-pundit corps finds appalling: the sudden worthlessness of having gone to school with Strobe Talbott; the unlikeliness that there will be any job (even a little one) in Newt Gingrich's office for David Gergen; the extraordinary waste of all the years spent sucking up to what now turn out to be the wrong people; the entire *concept* of Jesse Helms. A small but, to many, especially sharp horror was expressed the other day at *The New Republic's* eightieth-anniversary party, attended by all the better sort. Gazing around at the roomful of Chardonnay sippers, a Republican congressman said, with great satisfaction, "The hardest thing for them is going to be that being in the loop means reading the Washington *Times*."

THE Washington *Times* ranks a distant second in circulation to the Washington *Post* in the nation's capital, and since its inception, in 1982, it has always been the kind of thing that the better sort of people love to hate. It is associated with the Unification Church, one of those young, unseemly sects which are embarrassing in the nakedness of their passion; it is profoundly conservative; and—worst of all—it doesn't even have the grace to be ashamed of either of these failings. It is Patrick Buchanan-like in its pugnacity and breathtakingly blatant in its bias. Still, distasteful though it was, for a while there Washington insiders were obliged to read the thing: during the first Reagan Administration and for at least part of the second, the *Times* was, naturally, full of inside stories and gossip from the conservative White House. The Bush Presidency, which did not care to be seen in the company of the Buchananite right (at least not by day), was a much leaner period for *Times* scoops, and it was widely assumed that the Clinton Administration would be a disaster for the paper.

Instead, the *Times* rode hard on the scandal-and-screw-up beat, which turned out to be a rich field, thanks to Clinton, his government, and his friends. That made the paper a darling of the world of right-wing radio, and brought it, for the first time, a measure of national fame. And now, suddenly, the palmy days of Reagan have returned. In the *Times'* nearly-outside-the-Beltway newsroom, on unfashionable New York Avenue, the paper's staff is amused. "It's pretty funny, all right," said Francis Coombs, who is an assistant managing editor and handles much of the political and congressional coverage. "We're getting our calls returned a lot quicker all of a sudden, even from Democrats, and our reporters are telling stories about colleagues from some of the larger papers coming up to them and asking them for advice on whom to call if they want to talk to Republicans. A *Post* reporter—and may I add that we have been beating the *Post* like a drum all week—came up to one of our Hill reporters the other day and said, 'Well, it looks as if I'll have to get a subscription to the Washington *Times*.' " Mr. Coombs chuckled a little at that, in a not terribly kind way.

THE PARTY BEAT



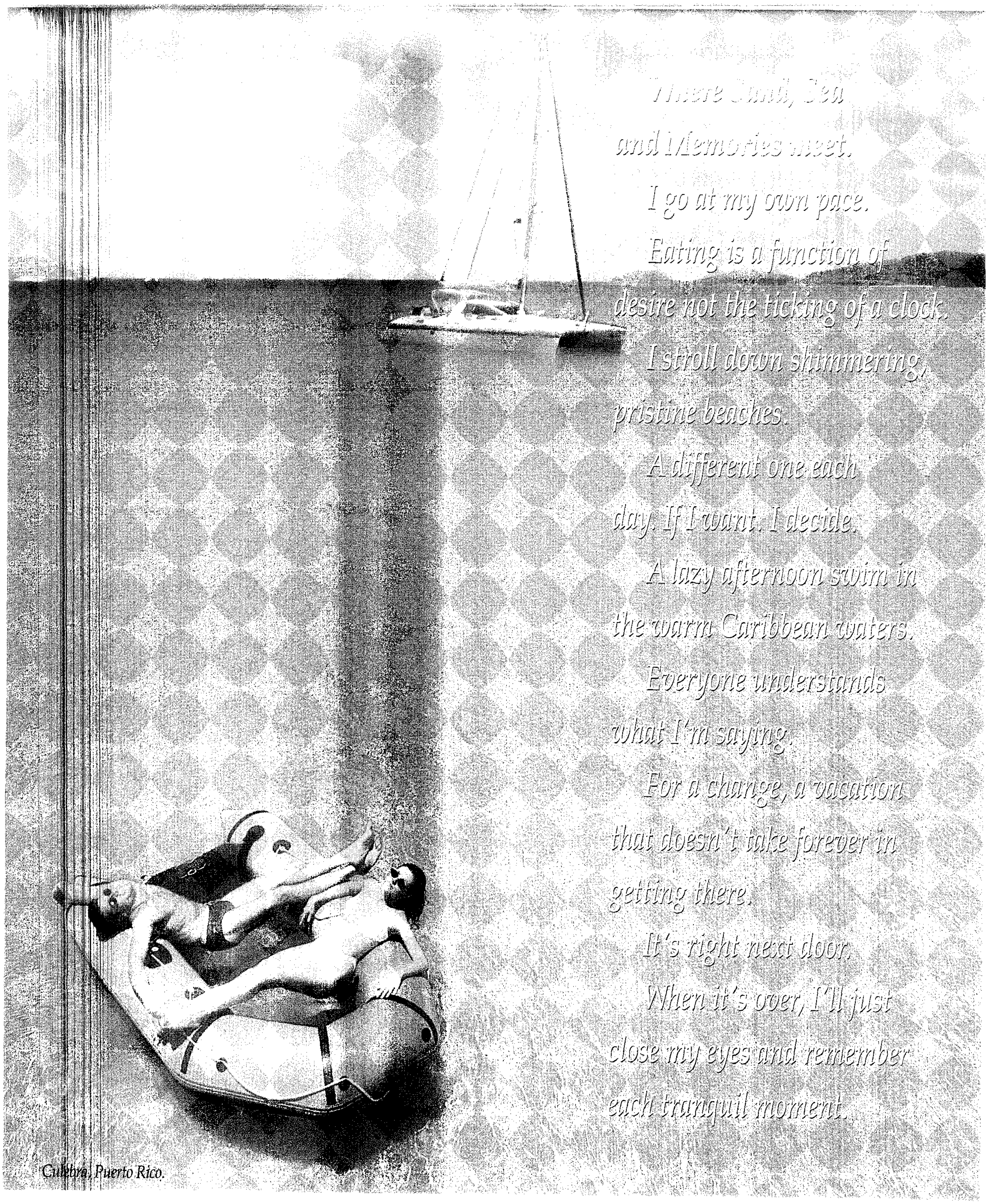
THE cops at the Nineteenth Precinct are taking on Barney, Silly Billy, and the Power Rangers for a piece of the Upper East Side children's-birthday market. It all started several months ago, when a resourceful mom called the station house, on East Sixty-seventh Street, and asked if she could have her preschooler's party there. Detective Louis Uliano, the precinct's community-relations officer and the father of a five-year-old, was open to the idea. "If you really think about it, it's not that much different from doing a party with a theme," Detective Uliano said the other day. "You do a party with Barney; you do a party with the Police Department."

There were some logistical hurdles to overcome, however. The Nineteenth is among the city's busiest station houses, with a steady stream of crooks arriving in handcuffs and victims waiting to file crime reports. "The precinct's not really the right place to have cake," Detective Uliano said. "We're not really set up for that." So together the cops and the mother came up with the idea of a tour of the station house and a safety lecture, after which the kids would walk to Peppermint Park, a nearby ice-cream parlor, where the cake would be served.

Detective Uliano doesn't know how word of the party, which was a complete success, seeped out, but it has sparked a wave of requests from moms who are under the impression that the cops have gone into the catering business. So far, the cops have played host to about a half-dozen parties, and Detective Uliano's bulletin board is filling up with Polaroids of smiling children sporting pretend police flak jackets and plastic badges. "Usually, we tell them to keep it to a group of twenty," he said.

Detective Uliano or Police Officer Stephen Petrillo, the detective's colleague in the community-relations office, or one of the precinct's youth officers greets the birthday boy or girl and his or her guests at the front door. "If the C.O.'s here, he usually says hello," Detective Uliano said, referring to the precinct commanding officer, Captain George J. Kelly. Next, the kids meet the desk sergeant and get fingerprinted. "We'll take one finger from each of the kids and put it on one card, so the birthday kid can take the card as a memento," Detective Uliano explained. "Then we go up to the detective squad. If they're not busy, we let the kids look at the holding cell." By "if they're not busy," the detective means if the cell isn't already occupied. "Some of the kids want to go in," he said. "Some don't." ♦

This week's contributors: Liesl Schillinger, Stephen Schiff, Hilton Als, Warren St. John, Michael Kelly, Ralph Gardner, Jr.



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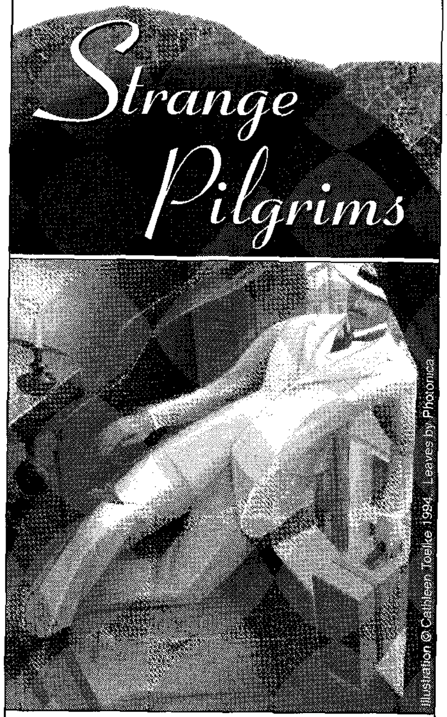

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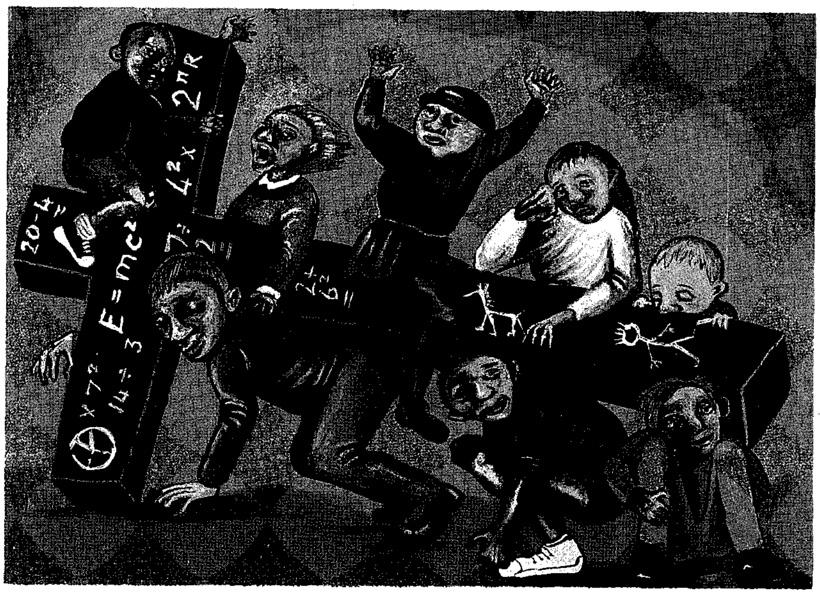
ANNALS OF LAW

LET US PRAY

School-prayer advocates are fighting the Supreme Court on the ground of religious freedom, but that is exactly what the Court protects.

BY STEPHEN L. CARTER

NOT every legal funeral leads to a political burial. Three decades ago, the Supreme Court held that organized classroom prayer in the public schools violates the First Amendment, and today most constitutional scholars believe that school prayer is a dead issue. Yet seven out of ten Americans continue to say that they favor it, and the politicians who serve them are finding increasingly sophisticated ways of giving the public what it wants. Several states and the District of Columbia are considering measures to restore some form of school prayer, and Georgia's Representative Newt Gingrich, who is slated to become the Speaker of the House in January, has called for a vote by July 4th on a constitutional amendment that would do just that. Two weeks ago, President Bill Clinton stunned many Democrats when he suggested that a properly crafted measure might gain his support.



SUE COE

Even though some White House officials quickly backed away from that possibility, the school-prayer issue does not divide Democrats and Republicans in quite the way that the political posturing of recent years might suggest. Senator Jim Sasser, a Tennessee Democrat, ran a commercial touting his support of school prayer during his 1994 reëlection campaign; he lost anyhow. During this summer's Democratic mayoral-primary race in Washington, the three candidates—liberal African-Americans all—endorsed school prayer or a moment of silence as a way of conveying values to troubled young people. Around the same time, the Clinton Administration, acting under a 1984 federal law, sided with a group of California high-school students who had been told that their prayer club could not meet during the lunch hour, when other student groups held meetings on virtually every subject under the sun; the school, the Justice Department argued in its brief, must not be allowed to "discriminate against religion," a phrase that was once a conservative patent.

The Supreme Court has remained steadfast, issuing firm edicts against a variety of forms of what could be described as school prayer no fewer than five times in the past thirty-two years. Such public-advocacy and litigation heavyweights as the American Civil Liberties Union and People for the American Way have worked to root out the practice whenever it has found fertile soil.

These battles create heroes. A Mississippi high-school principal with the marvellously ironic name of Bishop Knox is disciplined for allowing students to read a prayer over the public-address system and becomes an instant martyr. A Louisiana high-school valedictorian, told by her principal that she cannot address the graduating class on the subject she wants—the role of Jesus Christ in her life, complete with a prayer—becomes a symbol. (When she sues, a federal magistrate explains that the school was "compelled to censor" her remarks, the sort of language that feeds the fears of some conservative evangelists, who make the astonishing claim that America has "declared war" on Christianity.)

Indeed, although classroom prayer gets the headlines—and the promises of political action—prayer at graduation is, at the moment, a hotter issue, and one that was endorsed by the President early in his term. In its 1992 decision in a case called Lee v. Weisman, the Supreme Court ruled that a Rhode Island public school had violated the First Amendment by allowing a rabbi to read a prayer at its commencement. The same year, however, a federal appellate court permitted what it called a "nonsectarian and nonproselytizing" prayer at a high-school graduation, as long as it was initiated by a student and approved by a majority of the graduating class. The Supreme Court declined to review that decision, leaving school authorities all over the country in a quandary, for in nearly every school district there will be those students and parents who want a graduation prayer and those who do not.

The number of young people who want organized school prayer in some form may be growing. This fall, more than a million students across the country took part in a "pray-in" around school flagpoles. Their parents seem to want prayer, too: a 1993 Gallup survey for Phi Delta Kappa, an organization of educators, revealed that eighty-two per cent of Protestants and seventy-two per cent of Roman Catholics wanted Lee v. Weisman overturned. And they may be getting what they want, even without any legislative action. More than seventy per cent of public high schools surveyed by Phi Delta Kappa in 1993 either permitted student-led prayer at formal graduations or offered seniors a baccalaureate service—that is, a graduation ceremony with prayer.

Most controversial Supreme Court decisions settle into the nation's moral and political consciousness within a few decades, as long as the Justices are steadfast. It is no longer possible, for example, to run a national electoral campaign on a promise to overturn Brown v. Board of Education, and so we forget that it was once criticized by serious politicians as the handiwork of an overreaching judiciary. The Supreme Court's decision on "one person, one vote," the focus of considerable public rage just thirty years ago, has become so much a part of the culture that most Americans seem to assume that the rule is actually laid down somewhere in the Constitution. A substantial majority of voters have even come to support at least a limited form of the abortion right proclaimed in Roe v. Wade.

But prayer is evidently different. The matter of whether children should pray in school touches some fundament of the spirit, some wellspring of emotion and commitment, that other controversial decisions have not. One need not think public-school prayer a particularly good idea (I certainly don't) in order to realize how practicing religion—and passing it on to children—might be more relevant to the day-to-day lives of tens of millions of Americans than race, abortion, and other questions we often treat as more central. Besides, as polls and casual conversation quickly reveal, most parents believe that the public schools must do more to strengthen basic values in the young. So it is perhaps not so hard to understand why, no matter how many court decisions and public-policy arguments say that school prayer is forbidden, most Americans say that they want it.

The rejections by the courts—and the schools—almost always cite, quite properly, the principle commonly known as the separation of church and state. Indeed, that doctrine is cited so often that some religious activists have chosen it as an object of disdain, implying that, because the phrase does not ap-

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pear in the Constitution, the courts must have made it up. But the "wall of separation" metaphor, which appears in the work of Roger Williams and Thomas Jefferson, has a strong footing in the First Amendment. It was developed, and must be preserved, for the protection not of the state but of religions.

THE best place to start trying to understand precisely what is wrong with classroom prayer is with the Supreme Court's original classroom-prayer decisions, for they are among the most cited and least understood pronouncements in the Court's history. The two facts most commonly misapprehended are these: first, contrary to the extravagant rhetoric of some opponents of school prayer (and the strange rhetoric of a few federal judges), the Justices have never said that prayer is bad for children or that all vestiges of religion must be banished from public schools; second, contrary to the outlandish claims of some supporters of school prayer, the Justices have never put God "out of the classroom" and have never prohibited students from praying by themselves. Furthermore, there were conservative Justices as well as liberals in the majority in the original, 1962 school-prayer case.

This last point matters, because one cannot appreciate the nuanced jurisprudence of the original school-prayer cases without recognizing that they represented a cause that many conservatives found themselves—then and now—able to support. In 1962, the Justices struck down the daily recitation of a prayer written by the New York State Board of Regents: "Almighty God, we acknowledge our dependence upon Thee, and we beg Thy blessings upon us, our parents, our teachers, and our Country." The Court was confronting a nation that had not so long before won a shooting war against forces of religious hatred and exclusion, and one that, in the civil-rights struggle, was just beginning to acknowledge the tragedy of its own history.

The nation was changing religiously as well. It is true, as supporters of school prayer point out, that American children prayed in school for most of the nation's history, but it is also true that America was less religiously diverse—or, at least, less interested in preserving its religious diversity—than it had become by the sixties. Many historians believe that the great wave of Roman Catholic and Jewish private religious schools established in this century came in direct response to a sense on the part of parents that the public schools, in the process of trying to "Americanize" the immigrant children, were also trying to "Protestantize" them. Perhaps this history is what the Court had in mind in 1963, when it struck down the practices of reciting the Lord's Prayer and reading aloud sections of the Bible for religious purposes in school, and one Justice wrote, "Today the Nation is far more heterogeneous religiously. . . . Practices which may have been objectionable to no one in the time of Jefferson and Madison may today be highly offensive to many persons, the deeply devout and the nonbelievers alike."

In each of the Supreme Court's school-prayer cases, the Justices have been trying to avoid, at the minimum, official coercion of children to be religious or endorsement by the state of particular religious practices. If the state writes a prayer, selects a prayer, approves a prayer, or (through a teacher or a principal) leads a prayer, the message that it sends to impressionable children is that it is better if they pray than if they do not. Of course, the great majority of Americans believe precisely that, and, as one conservative activist told me earlier this year, in obvious irritation, "no one is forced to pray, and nobody is harmed by prayer." As a Christian, I quite agree that prayer is not harmful; indeed, my wife and I consider it essential, and want our children to grow up surrounded by it, and partly for that reason they attend a private religious school. But what the Supreme Court has recognized, and school-prayer advocates sometimes miss, is that the ideal of religious freedom means that the state should not express a view on how anyone should pray.

THAT much is hornbook constitutional law, and few serious scholars argue with it. But legal argument alone will not cause either worried parents or committed activists to change their view. The case pressed by advocates of school prayer has basically two parts: first, that the act of praying in school will help infuse much needed positive values into the educational enterprise, and hence into the students themselves; and,

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"I've had you appraised."

• •

second, that the opening prayer (or the increasingly popular moment of silence) can lend the school day an aura of sobriety that it otherwise lacks.

On its face, the moral argument for classroom prayer has a certain appeal. Unfortunately, school-prayer supporters overlook—or omit—some important facts. First, no reliable data support the claim that more prayer in public schools would lead to more morally upstanding children. In place of evidence, supporters offer a *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* argument: the rates of teen pregnancy, youth violence, and drug use have increased rapidly in the years since school prayer was banned, and therefore the ban must be the cause. This is reminiscent of the charming but statistically naïve point somebody came up with years ago: television viewership and lung cancer were both increasing, so one must cause the other. Second, throughout much of that often-cited period of American history in which children did pray in the public schools, we as a nation countenanced slavery, Jim Crow, lynchings, child labor, the oppression of women, and much more; that is, there are important ways in which our national morality has improved, not declined, in recent decades. To be sure, intensely religious people were in the forefront of the movements to end these and most other serious abuses and oppressions in our history. But there is no reason to suppose that they were motivated by the classroom prayers of their youth.

The argument that prayer leads to a supportive school atmosphere can perhaps be made most strongly in a setting that the news media, in the absence of violent crime to report, too frequently ignore: the inner cities. Although opponents of school prayer like to present as the image of the movement the white-male face of the Reverend Pat Robertson (or now Newt Gingrich), surveys paint a different picture: support for classroom prayer is higher among women than among men and is stronger in the black and Hispanic communities than in the white community. And although some opponents casually and offensively dismiss these apparently unexpected supporters as dupes of the "religious right," it is surely more sensible, and more helpful, to try to figure out why this support exists.

After giving an address at a meeting of a nationwide religious organization several months ago, I was approached by two black Christians from Washington, D.C., where the murder rate exceeds that of Northern Ireland. They had heard me explain why the Supreme Court was correct to rule organized classroom prayer unconstitutional, and wanted to know what I could offer in its place: school prayer, they argued, would help children understand the solemnity of the educational enterprise and would provide a vital step toward helping young people regain the strong positive values that they needed in order to resist the lure of easy sex, easy drugs, easy guns, and easy death.

The two men were not conservatives in the usual sense, but their message was one that conservatives are comfortable with. The night before that lecture, I had met two white Christians who run an organization often identified in the press as part of the religious right. They, too, talked of prayer as helping children begin the day in a centered way—centered on important rather than frivolous things—and as a tool for inculcating positive values to help children resist the many immoral temptations of secular culture. Their organization, they said, was rapidly gaining members from the black community, especially from the inner city.

In recent years, organizations of religious conservatives have worked hard to increase their black membership. The media tend to be skeptical of their motives, and so do many black leaders, who understandably cry foul. Where were conservatives, Eleanor Holmes Norton (among others) has asked in angry rebuttal, during the struggle for basic civil rights? The answer, of course, is that

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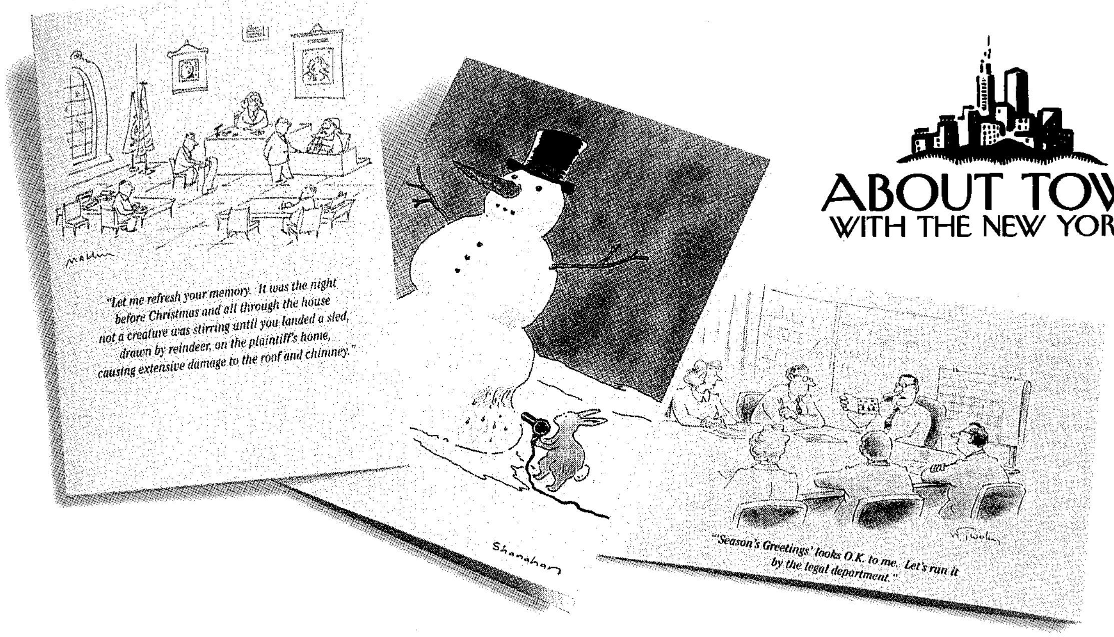
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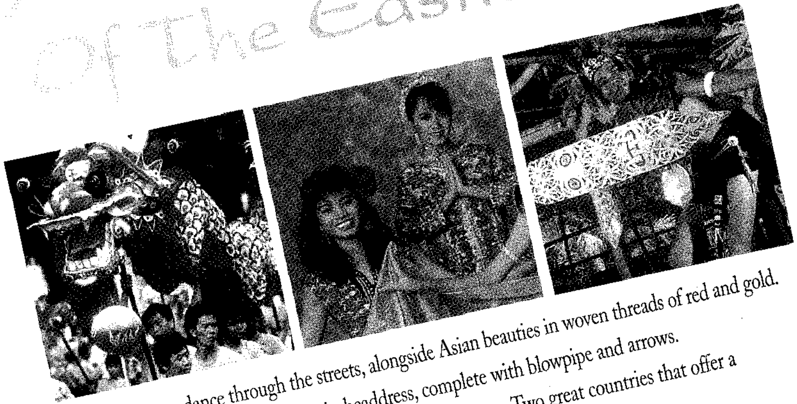
conservatives were on the wrong side of history, and this is a fact that black people are unlikely to forget. At the same time, it must be recognized that the religious activists at work among African-Americans are tapping into a genuine conservative sentiment. Walk into an inner-city Christian bookstore and run your fingers along the racks in the nonfiction section, and you may well find books by Pat Robertson right next to books by Carl Rowan. Black Americans, although they nearly always vote for liberal Democrats—for sensible historical and political reasons—are on many of our most divisive cultural issues quite conservative. To take just one example, opposition to gay rights unfortunately seems to run higher in the black community than in the nation as a whole, with many reserving special scorn for the claim that the struggle of homosexuals mirrors the struggle of African-Americans.

This cultural conservatism has deeply religious roots; it currently finds few political outlets, and, for the historical reasons cited by Norton, it is unlikely to find one among the activists of conservative Christianity. Yet even if one disputes, as I do, most of the particular political conclusions that this conservative strain among African-Americans would dictate, one must recognize its reality. It represents the voice of a community crying out desperately for a stable set of values to pass on to the next generation, which is seriously at risk; among black Christians, as among evangelicals generally, there are few moral relativists.

None of this should come as a surprise. Any other group with the religious demography of black America—overwhelmingly Protestant, and, within Protestantism, heavily evangelical and deeply imbued with the spirit of Biblical literalism—would be expected to come out strongly for classroom prayer, and most of them have.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN parents are not alone in believing that school prayer will help their children learn a better set of values. Indeed, public-school parents as a group are more supportive of school prayer than private-school parents. The fact that the Supreme Court has necessarily turned a deaf ear to their appeals may help ex-



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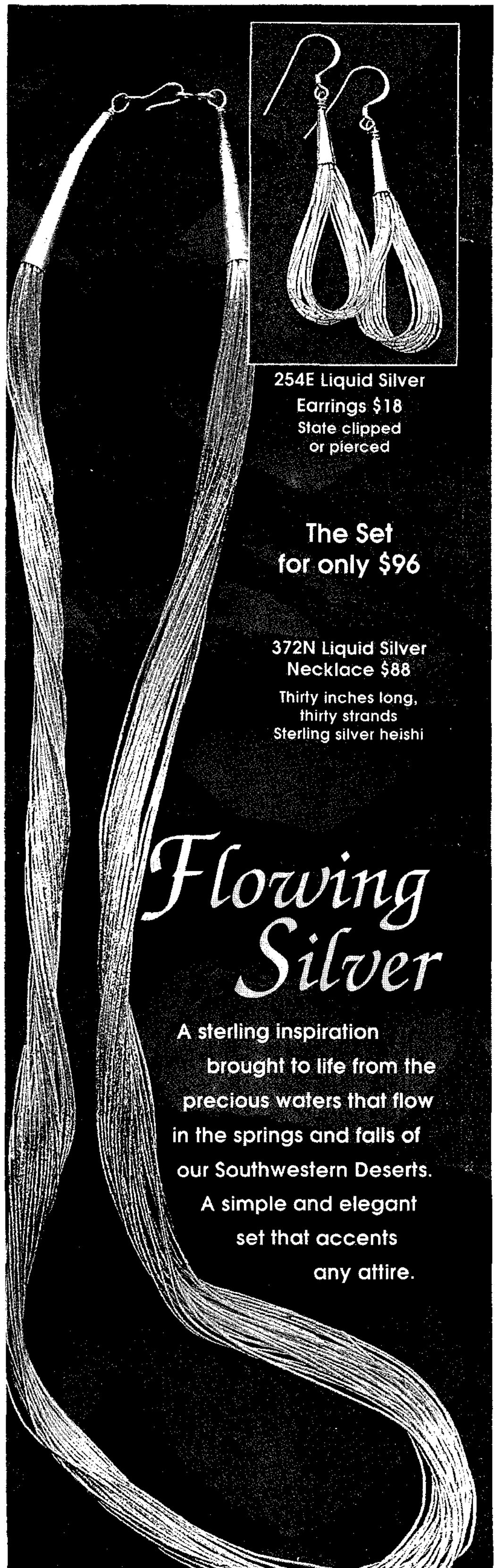
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plain why increasing numbers of parents seem inclined to opt out of the public-school system altogether: roughly twelve per cent of the nation's fifty million schoolchildren attend private schools. More than half of the nation's public-school parents say they would send their children to private school if they could afford it, and most of those parents would probably choose a religious school.

But alternatives to public school are often expensive, and, with private-school-voucher programs defeated wherever they've been put on the ballot, parents who believe that religion is necessary to set the proper moral tone in public schools are pressing a variety of other proposals, which include providing instruction in the role of religion in American history and life, excusing students from classes (especially sex-education classes) to which their parents have religious objections, and regulating the curriculum. The most prominent example of this last proposal involves the teaching of the theory of evolution, which some states banned for decades, on the ground that it interfered with the effort by parents to teach their children the Biblical version of creation. The Supreme Court struck down those restrictions in 1968, but some states responded by mandating the teaching of what has come to be called "scientific creationism"—the presentation of scientific evidence in support of the concept of a deliberate creation. In 1987, the Justices put a stop to that, too. As each effort to control what goes on in the public schools fails, worried parents and the activists who support them keep coming back to classroom prayer.

Still, the trend is not all one way. In 1984, Congress passed the Equal Access Act, which requires public schools to grant student religious groups the same meeting privileges that they grant to others. The Supreme Court sustained the constitutionality of the act in 1990. An increasingly popular way of making an end run around all the school-prayer cases is to require children to open the school day by sharing a moment of silence, which could be used for meditation or prayer, or even a quick nap. President Clinton has explicitly endorsed the idea, even though in 1985 the Supreme Court upheld a federal appellate-court ruling that struck down

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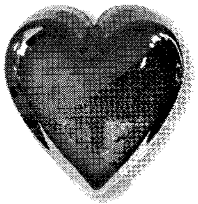
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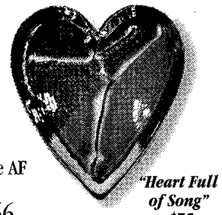
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an Alabama law allowing teachers to require a moment of silence, "for meditation or voluntary prayer," in the state's public schools. The Justices reasoned that the law endorsed religion as a "favored practice." But the Court, by resting its decision on the presence of the word "prayer" in a law, badly misapprehended its own jurisprudence on prayer in public schools. The evil that the original school-prayer decisions sought to avoid was not prayer or religion but government endorsement of particular religious practices.

The Court's implicit conclusion that the rights of some children are violated when children who want to pray silently are given an opportunity to do so puts one in mind of a famous story about Aron Nimzowitsch, the Baltic chess genius of the early twentieth century. In 1927, he sat down at an important tournament to play a game against the Slovenian master Milan Vidmar, who immediately lit up a cigar. Distracted by the fumes, Nimzowitsch complained to the tournament director, who asked Vidmar to put the cigar out. Vidmar good-naturedly did so, and the game resumed.

A few minutes later, Nimzowitsch stood once more before the puzzled tournament director. "Your opponent isn't smoking," the official pointed out.

"Yes, I know," Nimzowitsch said, "but he looks as if he wants to!"

OF course, when conservative activists call for classroom prayer, they have in mind nothing as neutral as a moment of silent reflection. But—assuming that no constitutional amendment is actually forthcoming—the movement must still reckon with the Supreme Court, which just last June, in the case of Board of Education of Kiryas Joel v. Grumet, issued another stern warning about mixing religion and public education. In Grumet, the Justices struck down the law under which the school district of Kiryas Joel was created. The village, situated about fifty-five miles north of New York City, is inhabited only by Satmar Hasidim. Nearly all the community's children attend private religious schools, where they learn to follow the strict rules of their faith. Kiryas Joel operates only a single public school, which serves about two hundred special-education students. According to the Justices, the very existence of the Kiryas Joel school district was a special favor that the State Legislature had bestowed upon a religious group. The evidence was in the village's demographics.

The residents of Kiryas Joel had sought their own district in 1989, a few years after the adjoining local district, citing constitutional concerns, stopped sending publicly paid special-education instructors into the private religious schools; a brief experiment of sending the special-education students to nearby public schools ended when the children suffered what parents called "panic, fear, and trauma." But the Court was not persuaded. "The fundamental source of constitutional concern here," Justice David Souter wrote for the majority, "is that the legislature itself may fail to exercise governmental authority in a religiously neutral way." In other words, special treatment for the Satmar community (as the Court designated it) might grant one religious group a special privilege that others, religious and nonreligious, were denied.

Of course, one might quarrel with the notion that the special accommodation for the Satmar constituted a threat to the religious freedom of others. One might point out, as the Stanford law professor Kathleen M. Sullivan has done, that, once one moves beyond our urban areas, the nation is full of religiously homogeneous school districts; presumably, children do not make fun of the accents or traditions or clothing of other children in such districts. It is difficult to imagine, moreover, that the Satmar Hasidim really are the special favorites of the law. But, once one accepts the majority's characterization of the facts (the dissent, naturally, had a different view), acceptance of the decision becomes quite easy. The message to worried parents seems to be that the Court will not look kindly on efforts to infuse public education with religious values.

BUT is that the only way to look at the villagers of Kiryas Joel—as a religious group that obtained a special fa-

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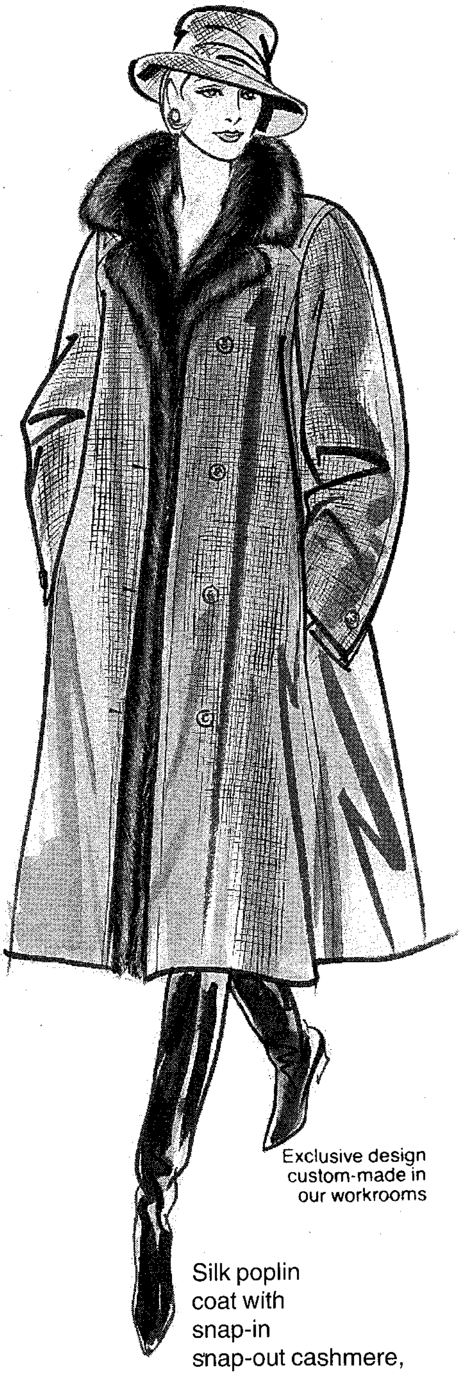

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vor from the state? A community's desire to preserve its values and traditions, even if they have a religious base, is not obviously the same as the desire to promote their religion. In other words, the people of Kiryas Joel could have had many concerns other than religious chauvinism to explain their desire to control the atmosphere in which their children would learn. And in this they would have been like most of the nation's parents.

The simple truth is that millions of parents, of all races, creeds, and economic strata, want their children's education to reflect the deep religiosity that permeates their own lives. One need not agree that prayer is the answer—again, there are no reliable data in support of the claim—in order to understand and share the concern that children learn strong, positive values, and also to recognize the commonalities between the black parents in Washington who demand classroom prayer and the Hasidic parents in Kiryas Joel who demand a safe and nurturing public school for their children. Both sets of parents want to send their children to schools that reinforce the moral teachings they offer at home instead of trivializing, ignoring, or actually opposing them.

In a community without religious dissenters, school prayer might actually work. One can readily imagine tiny, religiously homogeneous communities, perhaps along the Bible Belt or in the vast spaces of the West, in which the schools *do* reinforce the values that the parents teach, and prayer *is* a part of the school day, and nobody sues, because nobody minds. But the number of such communities must be vanishingly small, and the message of the Supreme Court's Kiryas Joel decision is that the state cannot intentionally create one.

Some culturally distinctive groups have indeed been preserved, such as the Old Order Amish, whose tightly knit communities, largely devoid of modern technology, are mainly found in Pennsylvania and several Midwestern states. In its 1972 decision in a case called Wisconsin v. Yoder, the Supreme Court ruled that the Amish may keep their children home from school after the eighth grade, in defiance of compulsory-attendance laws that the state applies to everybody else—a type of ruling that is

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called in the legal parlance an "accommodation" of religious beliefs. Without that parental freedom, the Amish way of life would likely have collapsed. But, as the Justices seemed to recognize, the Amish hold a peculiar place in American iconography: they are viewed less as a religious group than as a tourist attraction. "The Amish community has been a highly successful social unit within our society," the Court wrote, "even if apart from the conventional 'mainstream.'" The Amish, according to the Justices, prefer "informal learning-through-doing [and] wisdom, rather than technical knowledge; community welfare, rather than competition," and their children need just enough education "to read the Bible" and "to be good farmers and citizens." Reading Yoder today, the word "quaint" comes constantly to mind. And, indeed, when one travels through what has come to be called Pennsylvania Dutch country, and stops for ice cream at a shop where non-Amish teenagers behind the counter dress in cheap, kitschy imitations of the determinedly plain Amish garb, one sees the ultimate in trivialization of a religious community. The State of Pennsylvania might as well erect a sign: "Welcome to Amishland."

But that, perhaps, is the risk that a community accepts when it struggles hard to build a nurturing world for its children by preserving its differences from the mainstream. The separateness of the Amish community must have been the key to the Court's decision, because just about every other group that has sought a similar freedom since then has lost. The parents of Kiryas Joel, hoping to turn the tide, sought similar freedom and were evidently prepared to make a similar sacrifice. (One suspects that most Americans find the Hasidim as peculiar as they do the Amish.) This, however, the Justices would not allow. Indeed, now that the Satmar Hasidim of Kiryas Joel have lost their case, one has to wonder whether Yoder would be decided the same way today.

Many liberals cheered the Kiryas Joel decision as a paean to the cherished separation of church and state, but several religious organizations, concerned about preserving the ability of parents to bring up their children to follow religious rather than secular rules, were crushingly disappointed. It was left,

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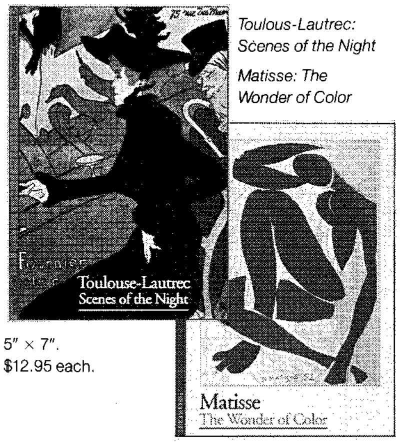

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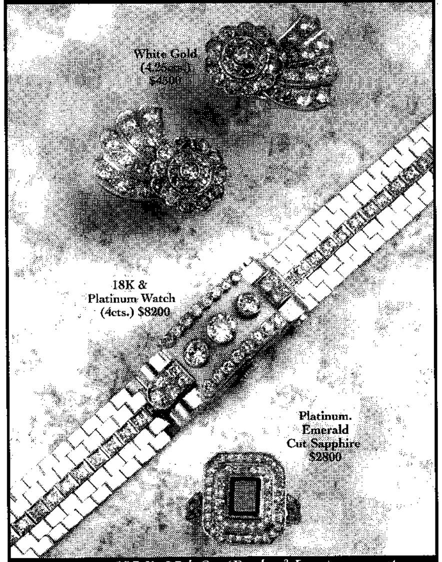

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oddly, to the conservative polemicist and sometime political candidate Patrick Buchanan to point to the contemporary liberal ideal of diversity, which so often seems to vanish when the issue is religion. "What, after all, is America all about, if not the freedom of people to be different?" Buchanan demanded in his syndicated column. Certainly it is true that the nation's culture is a composite of America's rich variety of variously assimilated groups, and although it is becoming increasingly hard for groups who wish to preserve their distinctiveness to do so, accomplishing that feat can be vital if they want to pass down traditions to their children. And children, it is often said, are precisely who one has religion for.

But the issue of teaching children is one in which cultural differences seem to be accorded less respect than in almost any other sphere. Perhaps the widespread demand for prayer in the public schools is best viewed as a metaphor for the same need that the Amish and the villagers of Kiryas Joel are seeking to fulfill: the desire to preserve for their children a core set of values and traditions in an increasingly complex and, to many religious parents, an increasingly hostile culture.

Small wonder that such sentiment is especially widespread among African-American parents, for although all children in America face risks and temptations that their parents did not, the calamities befalling young people in the inner cities are particularly acute. When the leading mayoral candidates in Washington call for prayer or moments of silence, this desire to instill values is surely the sentiment they are tapping. Many parental objections to the school curriculum can be viewed in the same way. "It doesn't seem right that the objection of one child should be able to stop everybody else from praying," one Christian activist said to me. She went on to compare prayer with sex education: why, then, she asked, shouldn't the objection of one child be able to stop everybody else from studying homosexuality as an alternative life style?

Classroom prayer, of course, is banned by the First Amendment, not by one child's objection. But a religious parent's objection should be sufficient to excuse her child from learning subjects,

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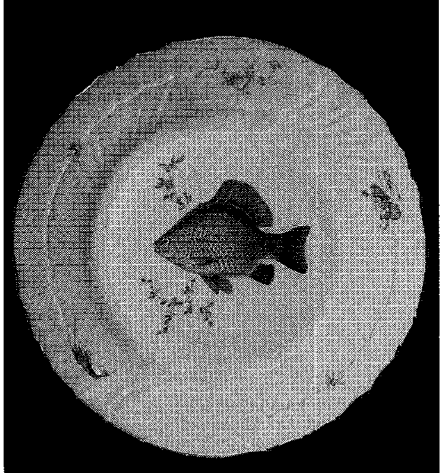

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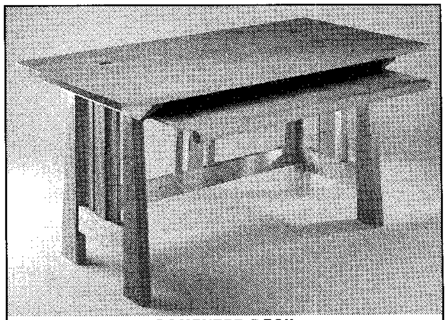

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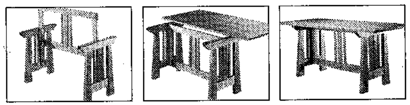

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whether sex education or evolution or an American history from which religion is absent; otherwise, the schools will play into the hands of those religious conservatives who argue that the implicit message of contemporary public education is that religion is not important, whereas these other matters—biology, sex education—are.

Here, again, what links concerns about prayer to concerns about sex education (and other parts of the curriculum) may be less a desire for schools that teach the parents' religion than a yearning for schools that teach the parents' values. This, in turn, suggests that the way for educators to deal seriously with the concerns of parents without introducing religious indoctrination in the public schools is to find ways of putting explicit instruction in values—in right and wrong—into the curriculum. In this way, worried parents might come to see the schools as their allies rather than their enemies in the project of the moral education of their children.

But will we be able to find values to agree on? Surprisingly, the evidence is that we can. According to a 1993 Gallup survey, more than ninety per cent of American adults believe that the public schools should teach honesty, racial tolerance, belief in democracy, and the Golden Rule. Two-thirds believe that the curriculum should preach sexual abstinence outside marriage. So, even though we as a nation quite famously have trouble agreeing on some issues, there are basic values on which there is a broad consensus. The idea of using the public schools as tools to educate for good character frightens many activists on the right and the left alike, since each side is desperately afraid that the other side would turn out to have more votes. But reinforcing strong, positive values need not mean immersing grade-school children in every contemporary controversy, and although many an interest group would have a curricular wish list, such wishes, in general, should not be granted. Education for values should stick to the points where the society has reached consensus; otherwise, when religious (or nonreligious) parents complain that the schools are trying to wean their children from them they will be right.

The idea of explicit education in morality in the public schools has the sup-

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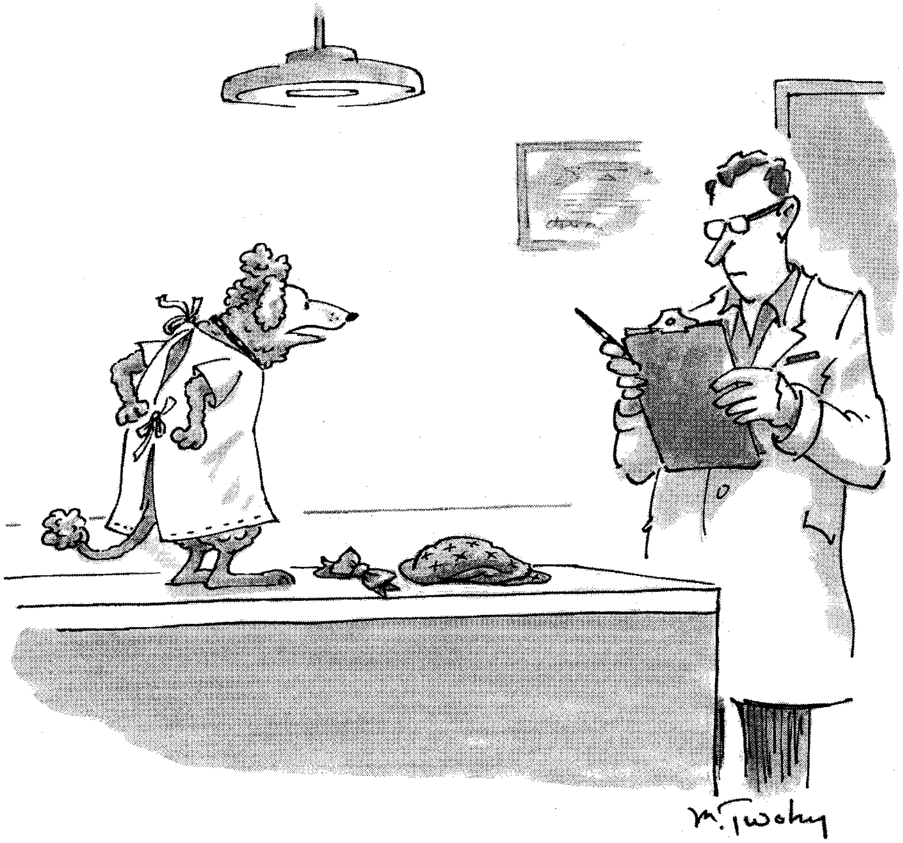
port of such figures as William Bennett, on the right, and such groups as People for the American Way, on the left. Several publishers are preparing textbooks, betting that the increasing public support will lead to curricular changes. And, despite the worries of some activists, nobody denies that the public schools are already in the values-teaching business: the only question is whether to make rigorous and explicit what is now often hazy and indirect. The teaching of shared values in the public schools might even draw the teeth of the school-prayer movement, for it would accomplish what the great majority of the parents who support that movement seem to want most, without abandoning the precious separation of church and state.

As for the villagers of Kiryas Joel, the New York Legislature worked out a response that would allow any autonomous village fulfilling certain requirements to establish a school district of its own—a possibility that Justice Sandra Day O'Connor pointed to in her very sensible concurring opinion on Grumet. The Satmar Hasidim would qualify, but so would other groups; religiosity would not be required. The response could, of course, still face legal challenge, and if it is struck down—one hopes that the courts will show better sense—another is available: the state could decide to allow special-education teachers paid with state funds to teach at parochial schools, exactly what it allowed before all the controversy. O'Connor correctly pointed out that nothing about the practice offends the Constitution: "If the government provides this education on-site at public schools and at nonsectarian private schools, it is only fair that it provide it on-site at sectarian schools as well."

Compromises of this kind would protect the Satmar Hasidim in their effort to rear their children in accordance with their values and traditions. But that is probably as far as a respect for religious freedom allows the schools to go. So it may be time for the seventy per cent or so of American adults who support classroom prayer to heed the remarks of Queen Elizabeth II, who commented during the celebration of America's bicentennial on what Britain learned from the Revolutionary War: it is important to know, Her Majesty said, "the right time, and the manner, of yielding that which it is impossible to keep." ♦



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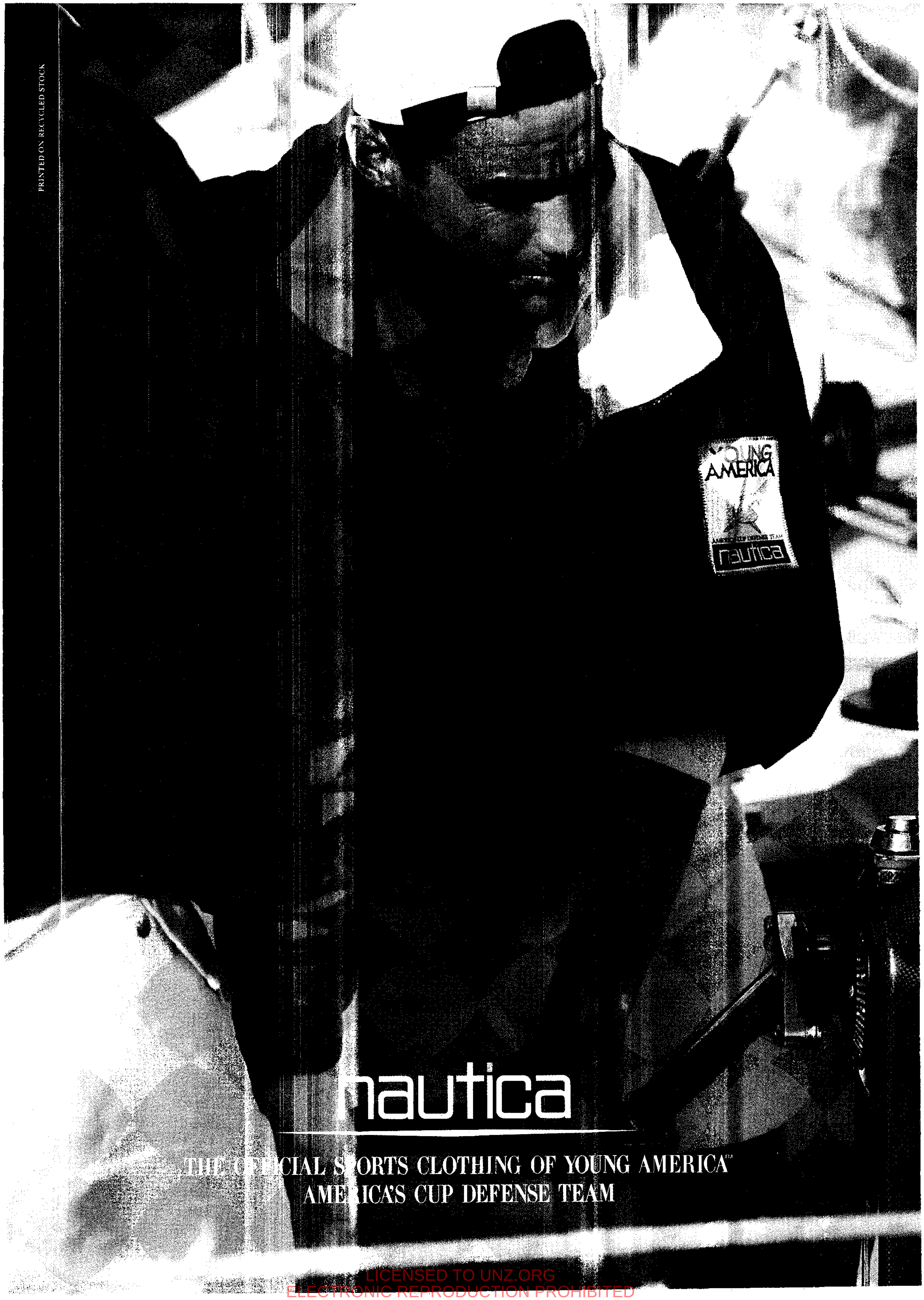
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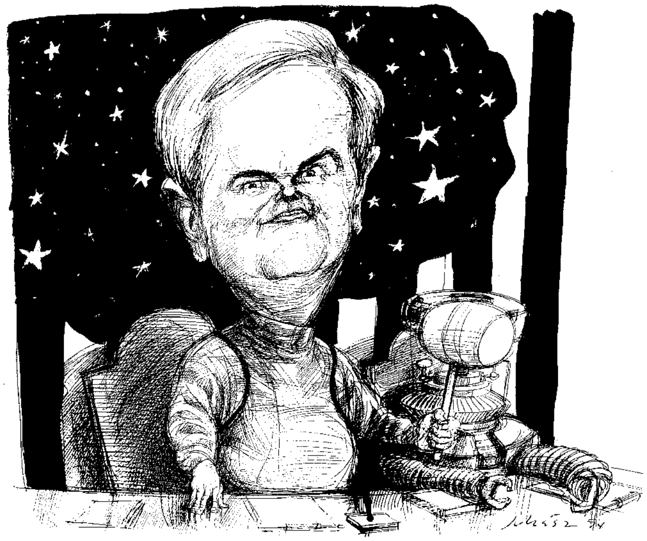
STATES OF MIND

LOST IN SPACE

Less well known than the contradictions of Newt Gingrich's personal life and politics are the oddities of his futurist cyber-right intellectual vision.

BY DAVID REMNICK

Two days after the Republican landslide, the *Wall Street Journal* ran a triumphant editorial headlined "THE REST OF HIM." The allusion was to a signal moment in conservative prehistory: in "King's Row," Ronald Reagan wakes up after his legs have been amputated and speaks the line that is to become the title of his memoir—"Where's the rest of me?" The *Journal's* editorial page is the marquee of the conservative movement, and with that headline the paper's editor, Robert Bartley, meant to declare that the Democratic intermission was over and the climactic reel of the Reagan epic could now unspool. But the scenario this time is not Reagan's at all. It's Newt's. Newt's tone, Newt's tactics, Newt's world view.



Gingrich: The next Speaker of the House yearns for a prelapsarian world, but one with orphanages, space stations, and religious software.

VICTOR JUHASZ

Newton Leroy Gingrich, the representative from Georgia's Sixth District and the presumptive Speaker of the House, is also a former history teacher at West Georgia College, in Carrollton, Georgia, and the author of one book, "Window of Opportunity" (1984), and an annual twenty-hour-long series of lectures, "Renewing American Civilization." To anyone who has read the book and watched the tapes, it is clear that Gingrich is a distinct variety of American character: an ideologue graced with a little learning and the power and the will to use it. Although he is pushing roughly the same principles as his fellow-conservatives (government, bad; market, good), his particular obsessions and visions are stranger—more radical—than the electorate may know. Gingrich is, for example, the Jerry Brown of the right, only farther out in space. He is not merely a supporter of an expanding space program; he is, he says in the book, for the employment of the handicapped on space stations, the better to take advantage of the no-gravity work environment. He is not merely anticipating the new millennium; he is eager to establish by the year 2000 a lunar research base that could be used only by the countries of the free world, the better to prove that "our path, rather than Castro's dictatorship, is the wave of the future." Gingrich blames the "counterculture" as a principal source of the national crisis, but the fact is that he has drawn upon the work of liberal futurists and given them a weird spin to the right.

For better or worse, Sam Rayburn, Tip O'Neill, and Tom Foley never let books, much less a belief in "cybernetic democracy," cloud their institutional sense of politics, but with the next Speaker we are getting a man proud of his Weltanschauung and insistent upon

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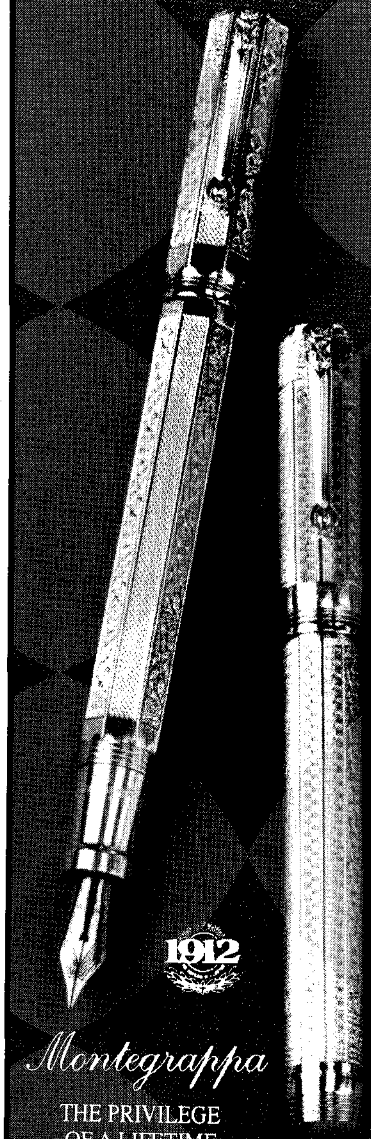

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its centrality to the twenty-first century. Gingrich is no great scholar—he did not get tenure at West Georgia—but he is possessed of a familiar intellectual style. He is a kind of itinerant pedant, the latest in a line of oddball American missionary-educators: the Chautauqua lecturers of the last century, the more recent self-help gurus, the management consultants, the motivational speakers. He is also reminiscent of the middlebrow thinkers of the nineteenth century who won their fame explaining all in a single volume: Henry George, whose "Progress and Poverty" led to the single-tax movement; Edward Bellamy, whose utopian "Looking Backward" inspired the Nationalist movement; William Harvey, whose "Coin's Financial School" became the scripture of the free-silver movement.

Frank Luntz, a pollster who helped Gingrich map out the Contract with America, told me that in the absence of the Cold War the Republicans must define "a quest, something to triumph over. We need a new American journey. I don't know what the quest will be. I haven't figured it out yet. But I know it's futuristic." Gingrich, who calls himself "a conservative futurist," experiences no such confusion. He is quite sure he understands what the quest will be.

Gingrich's first attempt at world-making was in the conventional form of his book—published, as it happens, by a primarily science-fiction-oriented outfit called Baen Enterprises. "Newt's a big science-fiction fan," one of Gingrich's advisers, the economist Jeffrey Eisenach, told me. There is much in "Window of Opportunity" (written jointly with his current wife, Marianne, and David Drake) to bear out that statement. "A year which ends in three zeroes is a rare thing indeed," Gingrich writes. "As the year 2000 approaches, more and more people will notice that they are about to celebrate something which no ancestor for nearly thirty generations saw, and which none of their successors for another thirty generations will see." Cool. With Alvin Toffler, Herman Kahn, Peter Drucker, and other futurists as his guides, Gingrich envisions "factories and jobs in space," tourism in space (including a "honeymoon on the Moon"), "religious software," "a host of modern high-tech efforts to spread a new, electronic gospel," and a

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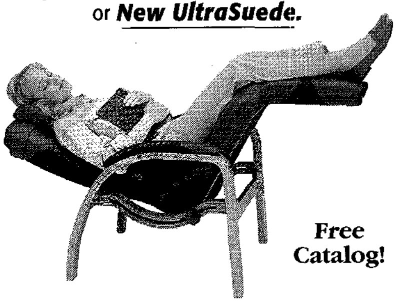

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kind of celestial lottery. "Develop the beginnings of populism in space and the beginnings of citizen involvement by initiating a tourism program for the American people," Gingrich recommends, for "Americans who have paid the taxes deserve to enjoy some of the benefits." He blames the "welfare state" for the decision not to move more quickly into space. "Even as Jimmy Carter told us we were suffering from malaise, Americans were going to see 'Star Wars,' " Gingrich writes.

The confidence of Gingrich's tone and the eccentricities of his thinking make some of his fellow-conservatives uneasy. They adore him for his power and admire him for his ability to discipline the House Republicans, but they are anxious because, unlike much of the press, they know his work. "For my taste, Gingrich is too futuristic, too psychobabble, too technobabble—he's a weird mishmash of all kinds of things," a leading conservative ideologue told me. "There is an ongoing attempt to try to keep Newt from going off the deep end. There's a certain grandiosity to his self-understanding which comes from Toffler, an end-of-an-era, the-whole-world-is-changing feeling he projects. The Republican Presidential candidates being proposed are really more conventional than Newt."

Many of the intellectual redoubts of Reaganism are still in place or have spawned newer versions of themselves. The Heritage Foundation is ascendant once more. The neoconservative scion William Kristol (he is the son of Irving Kristol and Gertrude Himmelfarb) thrived as Quayle's closest adviser during the Bush years and is now the leading Beltway philosopher for Republicans. Bartley's editorial page, which alternates supply-side alchemy and personal attack, is the main influence on the tone of the conservative discussion. The Free Press, under Adam Bellow (Saul's son), has become the conservative publishing house of choice, finding huge audiences for "The Real Anita Hill" and "The Bell Curve," among other books. Rush Limbaugh, whose reach increases all the time, popularizes the Reaganite creed for at least twenty million loyal listeners every week.

Some of these same conservatives know that as a futurist Gingrich has a spotty record. On the most important

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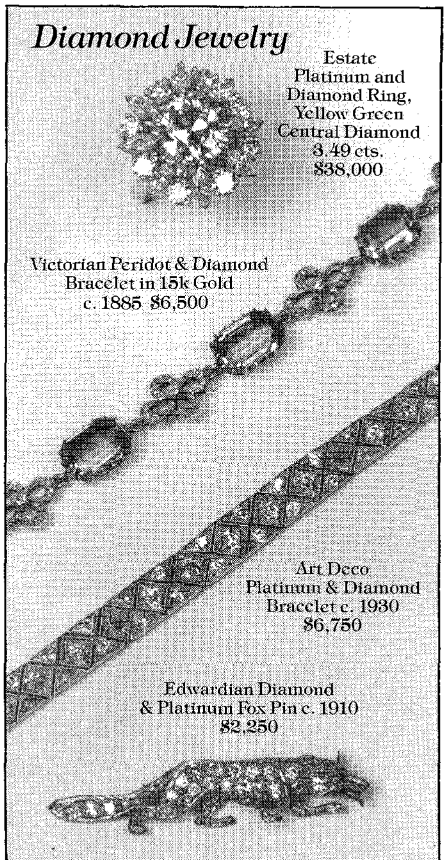
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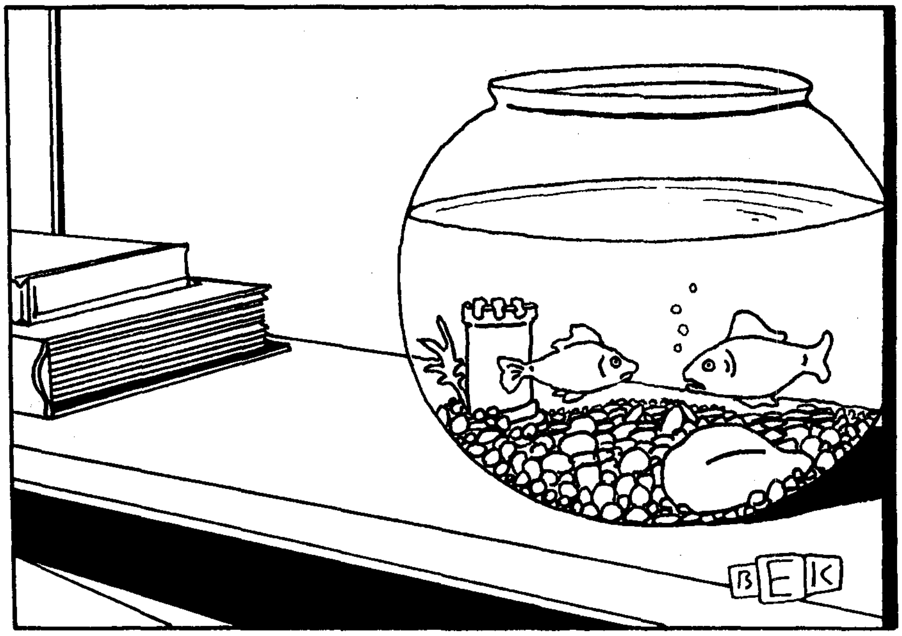
issue of the Reagan crusade, the confrontation with the Soviet Union, he rejected Reagan's blithe—and, as it turned out, accurate—faith that capitalism was just around the corner. In 1984, in "Window of Opportunity," Gingrich wrote, "We must expect the Soviet system to survive in its present brutish form for a very long time. There will be Soviet labor camps and Soviet torture chambers well into our great-grandchildren's lives."

Now it is 1994, the Soviet Union is a memory, and Gingrich, the visionary in power, is predicting the future once more. So far, the bulk of the press coverage has concentrated on his uncivil rhetoric—his desire to flatten the welfare state and undermine the "McGovernik" Clinton Presidency—and, even more, on his personal hypocrisies and contradictions. Many of the salient points of the Gingrich biography have been well known for years. *Mother Jones* dug up many of the details more than a decade ago, and lately *Newsweek* has unearthed some more. Over all, the portrait is not a pretty one. Gingrich has posed as a hawk in Congress, but in his youth he avoided the draft, taking a parental deferment during the Vietnam years. To have done otherwise, he said (without any of Clinton's nervous indirection), would have been "irrational." For public consumption, Gingrich fondly recalls that in his childhood "The Moon Is Blue" was banned in Boston because the dialogue included the word "virgin," and yet, as a rambunctious graduate student at Tulane University, he threatened to disrupt campus life unless the administration ceased declaring a photograph scheduled for the campus paper obscene and allowed it to be published.

Most bewildering of all has been Gingrich's position as a family-values man. During his first campaign, a Gingrich flyer read, "Newt's family is like your family." Perhaps, but not as he might have meant it. Once he was elected to the House, in 1978, Gingrich drifted away from his first wife, Jacqueline, and shortly thereafter, while she was recovering from a cancer operation, he appeared at her bedside, legal pad in hand, to discuss, among other matters, the terms of divorce. "The Devil has taken his heart," Jacqueline later told the congregants at the First Baptist Church in Carrollton. Gingrich's support of his family at that time was so grudging that the pastor at First Baptist took up a collection for Jacqueline and the two Gingrich daughters. As recently as last year, Jacqueline took her former husband to court over an alimony dispute. (Gingrich has denied mistreating her.)

The Democrats, stunned by the election results and the sorry picture they paint of the Party's future, are hoping that the current reëxamination of Gingrich's



"I've already made arrangements to be flushed down the toilet."

life will lead the public to draw damaging conclusions: that the man's past is sullied—or, at least, no less imperfect than that of the President. We are to imagine a traditional figure of Americana: the libertine in prig's clothing, Elmer Gantry in Congress. One can well understand the Democratic motivation here. Gingrich's vulnerability on the hypocrisy issue is, or should be, even greater than Bill Clinton's has ever been. In Gingrich's universe, moral relativism is among the greatest of sins. Tolerance is for the weak, the liberal. Conservatism is unashamedly judgmental; there are standards, there are morals, there are consequences. As Gingrich put it at the Republican National Convention in 1992, the Democratic Party "despises the values of the American people" and indulges a "multicultural nihilistic hedonism that is inherently destructive of a healthy society." The Republicans are the normal Americans, the law-abiders, the stoic vets, the faithful husbands.

Hypocrisy in power—in this case, the military and/or marital bounder as moral crusader—is a traditional American theme, and the telling might better be left to some modern Hawthorne or Dreiser. In the absence of such a chronicler, the Democratic Party apparatus has taken upon itself the research duties and the faxing of raw materials to a press finally grown bored with hammering nails into the President of the United States: the Gingrich divorce papers must be in the hands of every reporter from here to Maui.

THE Democrats have done a much poorer job of focussing on the curiosities of Newt Gingrich the thinker. This is baffling. Unlike the incoming Senate Majority Leader, Bob Dole, Gingrich is not a man of his institution; he is the proud owner of a "holistic" world view. He claims to live not from session to session but from epoch to epoch. The most complete artifacts of that world view are "Window of Opportunity" and the lectures, "Renewing American Civilization," which were videotaped at Reinhardt College, in Waleska, Georgia. The lectures are broadcast by satellite over the National Empowerment Television network and taught for credit at as many as twenty-five universities around the country.

Like Gingrich's personal life, his lecture series, in particular, has produced

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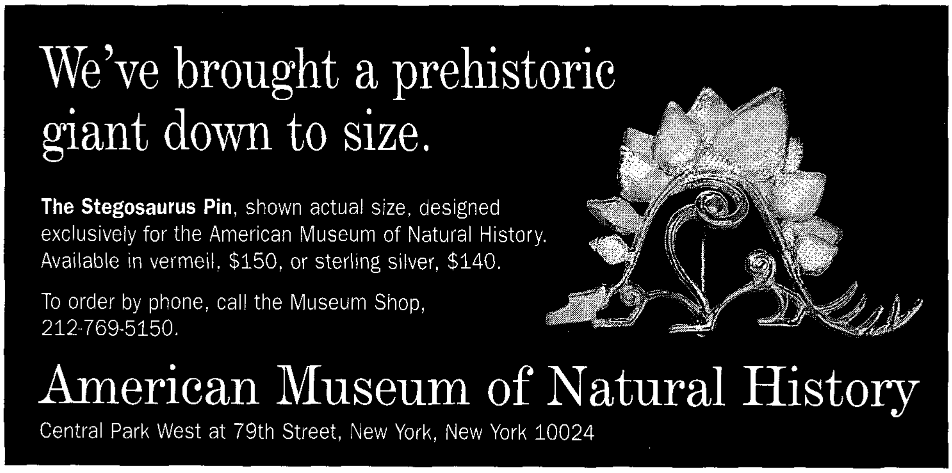
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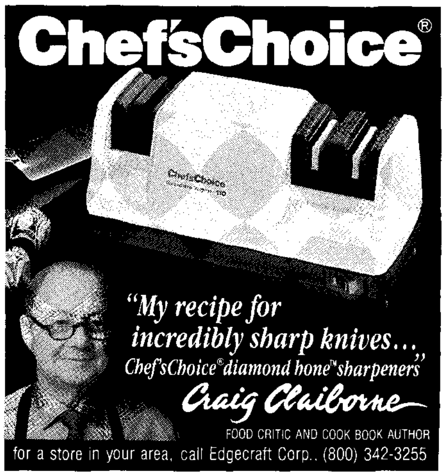
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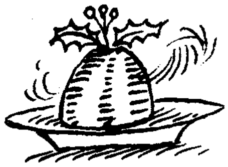
some modest scandal stories, especially in the Capitol Hill newspaper, *Roll Call.* It turns out that in the lectures Gingrich, on the pretext of describing all that is best in American life, promoted the goodness of some of the same corporations that made donations to Newt Gingrich. In one lecture, "Quality and Deming's Profound Knowledge," Gingrich took more than fifteen minutes to extoll the mercantile genius of the textile magnate Roger Milliken. Since 1985, Milliken and his brother have given three hundred thousand dollars to GOPAC, Gingrich's political-action committee, according to *Roll Call.* In another lecture Gingrich talked about the success story of Thomas Kershaw, the owner of the Cheers bar in Boston. Kershaw has contributed at least sixty-three thousand dollars to GOPAC. If there had been a decent-sized check from Eveready, Gingrich might have done fifteen minutes on the virtues of the Energizer bunny. Finally, after the press got on the story, the more rational heads close to Gingrich's project at Reinhardt College prevailed upon him to cut out some of the more obvious conflicts of interest.



Relying on "Window of Opportunity" and the lecture series to get a sense of Gingrich's thinking is a mind-numbing experience. It's as if the revolution were being led by a bulky computer-chip salesman seated next to you on an airplane. The salesman is reading the latest John Naisbitt, and suddenly he snaps the book shut. He leans over the armrest, his elbow arrowing into your ribs, his face four inches from yours. "Friend," he says, too loudly, "you just gotta read this. It tells you *everything* you need to know." Gingrich is the sort of pedant who does not indulge in digression, wit, interpretation, subtlety. His mind is set out like a flow chart, and he is constantly demanding that you follow him through the wilderness: "I want to go back for just a minute and talk about vision and strategies and projects and tactics before I walk you through this." He uses the schematic language of the self-help guru and the one-minute manager. "I think there are *nine* vision-level principles for personal strength." In fact, his "philosophy" sounds a lot like the Contract with America or "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People"—charmless and absolute.

"Window of Opportunity" features some familiar futurist dreams: biotechnology will take care of our food problems no matter what the population; the Tofflerian "third wave" communications revolution will let us work at home, freeing us to "schedule that birthday party or Cub Scout meeting which used to be so troublesome." Gingrich is a gadgets man. He describes home video-computer systems to help improve your golf swing, and "health chairs" to monitor diet and let you "change recipes to minimize boredom while achieving the desired nutritional effect." When he talks about visionaries of the past, he refers to Jefferson and Madison, Ray Kroc and Colonel Sanders.

The lectures omit what one Republican strategist calls "the space stuff," and carry on a battle against what Gingrich imagines to be the enemies of original American principles. "Countercultural" thinking, the subversive result of New Deal and Great Society programs, is for Gingrich the bane of a decent American future. Therein lies a distinct intellectual and political difference with Reaganism. Although Reagan always flirted with the religious right, he never hammered on the idea of cultural warfare as hard, or as seriously, as do Gingrich and the new revolutionaries.

Each tape begins with a rendition of "America, the Beautiful" against a backdrop of babbling brooks, the Grand Canyon, ducks, moose, national memorials. Then Gingrich comes on, standing in front of a bookcase. A few rows of eager college students join the video cameras to watch Gingrich for twenty hours. The presumptive Speaker's lecture style is numbingly programmatic. Everything is a list or a catchphrase or, at best, a recommendation. The first tape begins with a sketch of the whole—a proposition, then a set of principles.

THE CENTRAL PROPOSITION

There Is an American Civilization. It Is Diverse and Multiethnic But Is In Fact One Civilization . . .

THE FIVE PRINCIPLES OF
AMERICAN CIVILIZATION

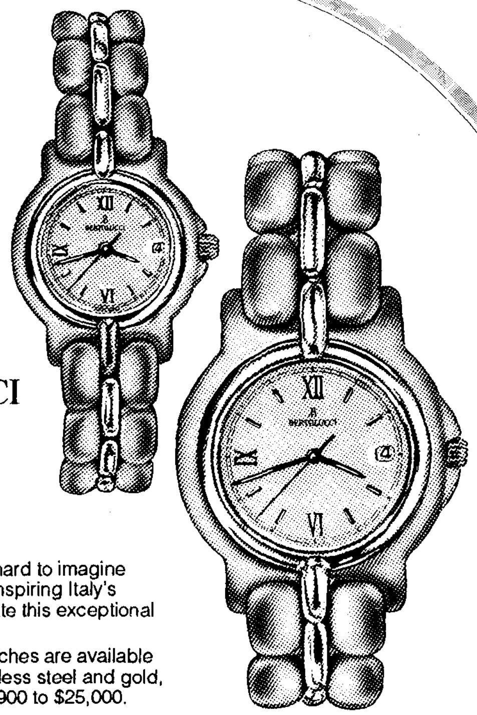
Personal Strength
Entrepreneurial Free Enterprise
The Spirit of Invention and Discovery
Quality As Described by Deming
The Lessons of American History

The little blue outline books that come with the tapes are big on capital letters—a style that reflects the lectures quite well. Everything is emphatic. Gingrich makes constant reference to material his listeners ought to read—Arianna Huffington's essay "Twelve Steps to American Renewal," for one—but the lectures are not aimed at a thorough understanding of any particular book or set of ideas. Like so many self-help books, they have an evangelical quality, sure and reductive, and they advance toward a conservative analysis of health care, the urban crisis, and the future of the economy. To begin, Gingrich wants to establish, in the simplest way possible, that America is not a set of barely interlocking cultures—as he supposes his nemeses, the multiculturalists, would have it—but, rather, a unified civilization built upon a set of five (not four, not six) principles. In the succeeding tapes, Gingrich gives a full treatment to each of the principles and then superimposes them on various political issues. There is never any sense that American principles are more varied or more complicated. As the self-proclaimed leader of the party of ideas, Gingrich is all bromides. In his lecture on "Personal Strength," he says:

We Favor:
Work Over Laziness
Saving Over Debt
Family Over Individual Chaos
Helping Your Children Over Abandonment
Responsibility Over Irresponsibility
Learning Over Ignorance
Responsible Citizenship Over Indifference

Presumably, the counterculture opposes them all. To Gingrich, these foundations of American civilization have been corrupted and corroded by his enemies. The resentments, too, come in the form of outlines and rubrics: "Cultural Élites Despise Politics"; "Mencken Despised People"; "Anti-politics is the dominant attitude of Common Cause, of Ralph Nader, of the newsrooms." In Mencken, for one, Gingrich can see only a misanthrope, a hater, and is blind to Mencken's wit, his capacity to puncture a fraud in a phrase. Which stands to reason. Mencken would have seen through Gingrich's intellectual vanities and self-inflated crusades, and sliced him up like a Sunday ham. Gingrich has probably read enough Mencken to know that.

THE substance of Gingrich's book and his lectures does not amount to much; the ideas are a thin pastiche,



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a kind of decoration for the harsh core within. When it comes to politics, however, they say quite a lot about his ambitions and his political style. Unlike George Bush, for example, who had so much trouble with "the vision thing" and suffered the political consequences within his party, Gingrich wants desperately to raise himself above the day-to-day. Nothing, he has said, is as important as his videotaped lectures—not even being Speaker of the House. For Gingrich, the lectures are a kind of alternative education, a weapon aimed at a dying order, like the cassettes of the Ayatollah's sermons that Iranian fundamentalists used to produce in the time of the Shah. In a letter to an official of the Tobacco Institute, Gingrich's adviser Jeffrey Eisenach wrote, "The goal of this project is simple: To train, by April, 1996, two hundred thousand plus citizens into a model for replacing the welfare state and reforming our government."

As for the "space stuff," Gingrich's motivations may be more mundane. Ever since 1949, when Carl Vinson, of Georgia, became chairman of the House Committee on Armed Services and, later, was influential in the appointment of his grandnephew, Sam Nunn, to the Senate Committee on Armed Services, Georgia has been evolving into a bastion of defense spending—and a well-protected one at that. Without federal spending in Georgia, the state would suffer dramatically. Smaller government is an essential part of Gingrich's vision, but he is unlikely to attempt to slash the government's role in the economy of the state of Georgia.

Politically, Gingrich believes in the importance of making conservatism appear avant-garde. To stay ahead, he has taken a page from the Atari Democrats of the early nineteen-eighties—adopting the vocabulary of a wide range of futurists, and putting it in the service of his own political goals. He yearns for a prelapsarian world, but one with orphanages, space stations, and religious software. Gingrich saw how in the late seventies and early eighties conservatism, with the likes of *Commentary* leading the way, captured a sense of intellectual élan and mission from the Democratic Party. Now conservatism, including Gingrich, wants desperately to make its domestic agenda the new crusade, the fill-in for that great absence in American life—the Cold War. Irving Kristol, who remains important in the movement (and not only as William's father), wrote last year in *The National Interest*, "There is no 'after the Cold War' for me. So far from having ended, my cold war has increased in intensity, as sector after sector of American life has been ruthlessly corrupted by the liberal ethos. . . . Now that the other 'Cold War' is over, the real cold war has begun. We are far less prepared for this cold war, far more vulnerable to our enemy, than was the case with our victorious war against a global Communist threat."

Gingrich shares Kristol's fury. What a new cold war requires, of course, is a new enemy. All the middlebrow academic camouflage in the world cannot mask Gingrich's attempt to demonize his political opponents, to inflame and coarsen a legitimate cultural debate. He means to create a Manichaean scheme in domestic politics as severe and confrontational as the struggle with Soviet Communism at the height of the Cold War. There is to be no mercy for the "other side" or for anyone else. Gingrich intends to reform the welfare system, for example, by withholding support from unemployed single mothers if they have any additional children, the better to change their behavior. Missing is the question of America's sense of itself as a compassionate society. It seems that compassion—unlike "Quality As Described by Deming"—is no longer a "Principle of American Civilization."

As the leader of the new conservative revolution, Gingrich has not mastered even the appearance of benevolence. That much is evident before one reviews his works of futurism, and far more so afterward. "I wish there were another Ronald Reagan, frankly, but you don't get those very often," Robert Bartley, of the *Journal*, said, reviewing the future standard-bearers of the Republican Party. "One of Reagan's pluses was that he could do all these things and still wear a white hat." Newt cannot. He wears his black hat proudly and squints, looking back to the future. ♦

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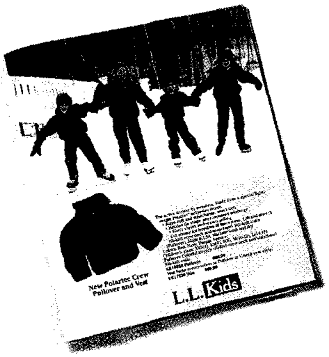
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PROFILE

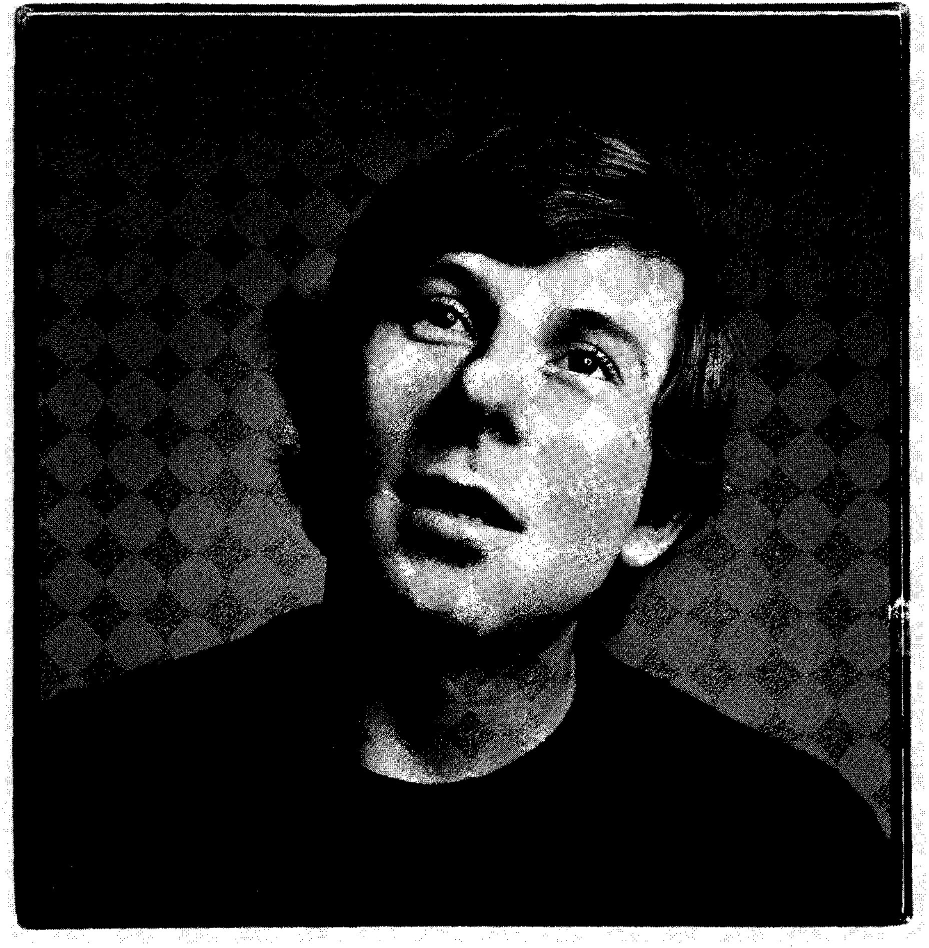
ARTIST IN EXILE

The repercussions of life lived under a brutal regime are the subject of Roman Polanski's new movie, "Death and the Maiden," in which the political is deeply personal—and eerily resonant of Polanski's own story.

BY LAWRENCE WESCHLER

HE has at last begun to look his age. Well, no, that's an exaggeration. Roman Polanski looks forty but is in fact sixty-one. At least he looks like an adult, though, which through most of his life he hardly ever has. His features—fetching or ferrety, depending on your point of view—have softened. His focus, however, has sharpened—or has sharpened again. He has just completed work on one of his most significant films in years, the screen adaptation of the Chilean playwright Ariel Dorfman's "Death and the Maiden," which is scheduled for release this Christmas season—in time, as they say in Hollywood, for Academy consideration.

Dorfman's play concerns the interactions of three characters: a skittish woman who years ago survived torture and rape at the hands of a brutal military regime; her husband, an eminent attorney and human-rights activist who has been chosen by his country's new demo-



PHOTOGRAPHS BY RICHARD AVEDON

Roman Polanski in New York City, 1966 (above), and in Paris, 1994.

cratic President to head a commission charged with ventilating (though not prosecuting) a circumscribed fraction of the prior regime's depredations, conspicuously not to include cases such as his own wife's; and a Good Samaritan doctor who, one evening, stops to help the husband after his car has broken down on a remote stretch of highway, and then volunteers to deliver him to the weekend cottage where his wife has been anxiously waiting. The wife instantly recognizes the doctor's voice, with absolute and horrifying conviction, as that of the man who supervised her tortures as she lay blindfolded and strapped to one of the regime's interrogation tables, and raped her repeatedly. Polanski has cast Sigourney Weaver as the wife, Stuart Wilson as the lawyer-husband, and Ben Kingsley as the doctor.

The usual procedure for adapting a stage play to the screen is to open it out, with, for instance, all sorts of exterior location shots. In this instance, however, Polanski, Dorfman, and their co-scenarist, Rafael Yglesias, decided to draw the story in even tighter, restricting the action to a single stormy night; almost the entire ten-week shoot, earlier this year, took place inside a ramshackle vacation house built on a dimly lighted soundstage at the Studios de Boulogne, outside Paris. It was on this set that I caught up with Polanski. The first day I was there, he and his crew happened to be working through one of the film's most shocking early scenes: The grateful husband has invited the doctor to spend the night, the doctor has sprawled out on the living-room sofa and gone to sleep, and, some time later, the wife (who had bolted at the sound of the doctor's voice) is returning. She approaches the sofa stealthily, but as she does the doctor awakens, and she bashes him senseless. She drags his limp body across the room and starts tying him into a wooden chair.

In the play, the doctor stayed unconscious until he was firmly lashed to the chair, but Polanski and his colleagues have energized the scene considerably: as the doctor is being tied up, he regains consciousness and calls out in fear, threatening to wake his host, who is asleep in the next room. In a panic, the wife reaches under her skirt, yanks off her panties, and shoves them into his mouth. Then she reaches for a roll of packing tape on a nearby table, hikes up her skirt in order to straddle his lap, and then wraps tape around his head and mouth—once, twice, three times—and leans close to his cheek to rip the tape from the roll with her teeth.

The effect is visceral and perverse, even after five or six rehearsals and ten or twelve takes. The scene is also quite an ordeal for the actors, particularly for Kingsley, who, though his neck and face have been oiled, still suffers during the tearing off of the tape before each new take. Polanski and Kingsley joke between takes about just how many beers one is going to owe the other when this is all over, but clearly Polanski is concerned. "Ach!" he says at one point. "This is terrible. I should have had them rehearse on *me*. The director should never put his actor through something he wouldn't be willing to endure himself."

Suddenly, he grabs the roll and wraps tape—once, twice, three times—around his own head.

"DEATH AND THE MAIDEN" might have served as an alternative title for well over half of Roman Polanski's movies (for "Knife in the Water," for instance, and "Repulsion," and "Chinatown," and "The Tenant" and "Tess," and "Frantic" and "Bitter Moon," and maybe even for "Macbeth" or "Rosemary's Baby"), but Polanski would hardly have seemed the most obvious candidate to direct the film version of Dorfman's play, which is an overtly political thriller. After all—except, possibly, in "Chinatown"—Polanski as a director has seldom shown the remotest interest in overt politics of any sort.

On the other hand, in Dorfman's tight little play the political is deeply personal, and in the film version, as the wife proceeds to subject the doctor to an all-night trial, the mood of intensifying claustrophobia, of three scorpions tangling in an ever-tapering bottle, is so distinctly Polanskian that the whole project might well have been dubbed "Knife in the Water II," in homage to the director's first feature film. Forget Polanski's films—Dorfman's play is so evocative of certain aspects of Polanski's *life* that at times it seems that Dorfman must have had no one else but him in mind—forget Chile—when he wrote the original play. For the play neatly distributes among its three characters three of the principal guises by which Polanski's life has come to be so publicly known: Polanski the guilt-ridden husband who had to come to terms with the savage killing of his own young wife, Sharon Tate, by Charles Manson and his gang, in 1969; Polanski the man himself accused, eight years after that, of statutory rape, who, like the doctor, steadfastly continued to maintain his innocence (or, at any rate, to insist that free consent was involved in that fateful interlude with a thirteen-year-old girl, which culminated in his arrest, incarceration, and eventual flight from Hollywood and his continuing exile); and, before either of those events, Polanski the young Jewish victim of a Fascist regime during the Nazi occupation of his native Poland.

Polanski would probably not go along with any such autobiographical associations. In fact, for years he has bridled at the psychobiographical interpretations that his films consistently evoke, among both critics and audiences. Yet he keeps on generating films that not only invite such interpretations but insist upon them. Indeed, not only have they seemed to reflect his own prior life but often they have even seemed to anticipate the bizarre turns his life was about to take—and, at times, almost to provoke them. This intertwining of Polanski's life and his work is one of the enduring fascinations of the director's career, right alongside its technical brilliance and his passion for the medium of film itself.

CURIOUSLY, the presence on the set who most vividly summoned to mind Polanski's own childhood victimization wasn't so much Sigourney Weaver, playing the torture victim, as Ben Kingsley, playing the putative torturer, for Kingsley's most recent film role had been that of the sainted accountant in Steven Spielberg's "Schindler's List," and Polanski, in his youth, had actually been something of a *Schindlerjude* manqué. A quarter turn of the screw, and he could have been one of those Kraków Jews whose rescue and protection were chronicled in Spielberg's film. Many of Polanski's friends and relatives were *Schindlerjuden;* and over the past decade Spielberg was in touch with Polanski several times regarding the film's evolving script, though Polanski begged off at the prospect of directing such material, still feeling too close to it.

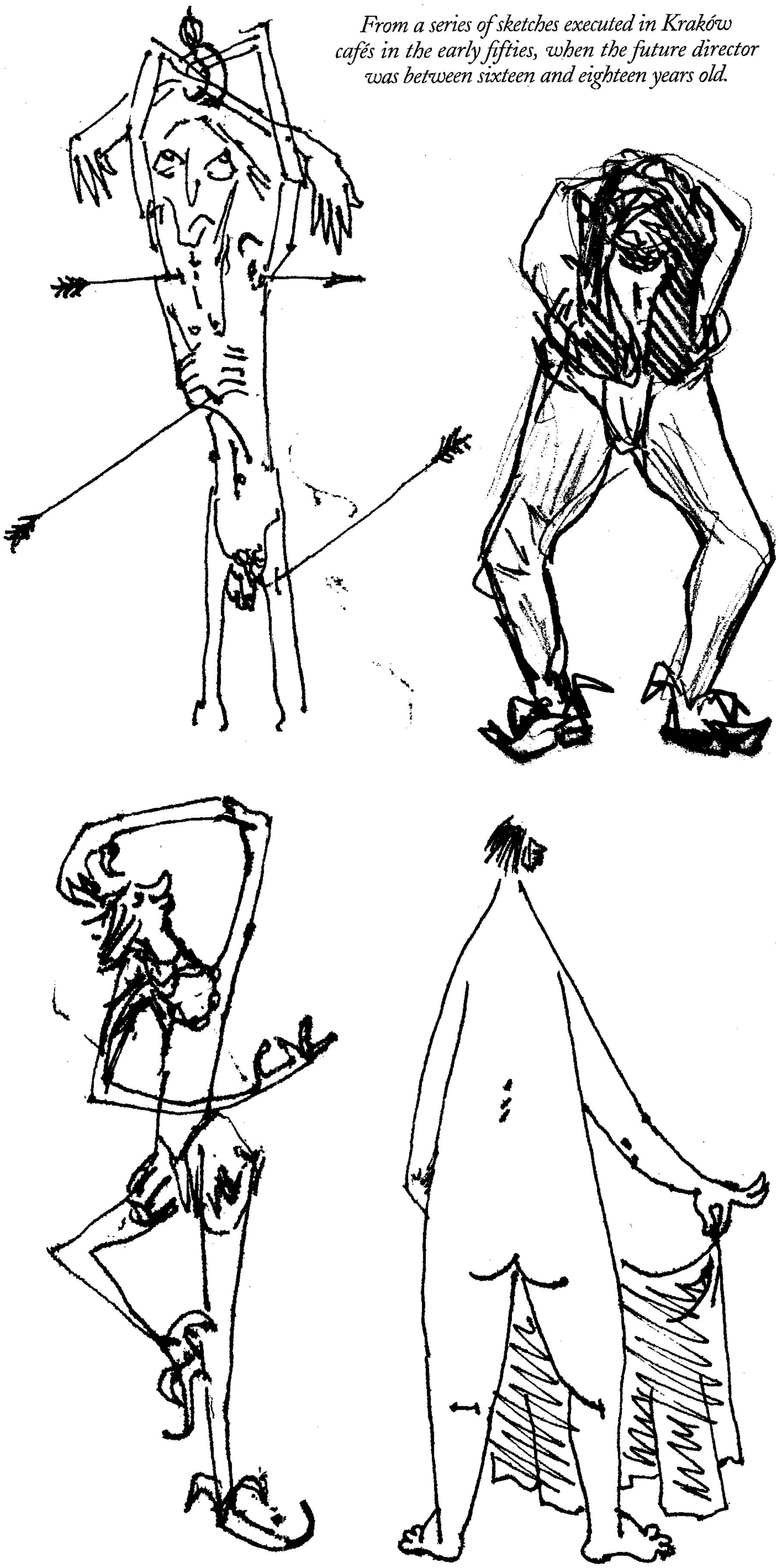
Polanski was born in Paris in 1933,

the year of Hitler's ascendancy. His father, Ryszard, was a would-be bohemian—a Jewish émigré from Poland, down and out in the European economic depression, whose charm and vitality allowed him to win the affections of a beautiful, married Russian half-Jewess named Bula Katz. She left her husband for Ryszard a year before Roman's birth, and in 1936, in a fatefully ill-judged move, a disillusioned Ryszard returned to his native Kraków with his new family, and established a small plastics-manufacturing concern. Three years later, and just a few weeks after Roman had entered school, Hitler's forces stormed across the Polish border. Roman did not see the inside of another classroom for six years.

In the months following the Nazi invasion, the family was forced to move from one apartment to another, in a tightening gyre. During various breaks from the set, as Polanski related his wartime memories to me he usually spoke in an emotionless monotone, but his voice tightened noticeably one afternoon as he described the sheer horror he had felt when, as a seven-year-old, he leaned out his second-floor-apartment window one morning and instantly realized the significance of what was happening: the Nazis were walling up the end of his street—they were sealing the ghetto.

He reverted to monotone a few moments later as he told me about watching an old woman who was having trouble keeping up with a group of people being marched along by the Nazis. The woman fell to all fours, and as she was pleading with a German officer, he nonchalantly pulled out a pistol and shot her in the back. She collapsed, lifeless, to the ground. This was but one of several violent incidents that Roman witnessed as a child.

When Polanski discusses the violence that occurs in his films, he often asserts that, far from being a sensationalist, he is a pure realist; and certainly he is one of the few directors around who have experienced at first hand such a sheer amount and so many varieties of violence. In a 1972 review of "Macbeth," Pauline Kael noted that it was not necessarily the quantity of violence in Polanski's film that so unsettled the viewer but the fact that the violence occurs "always a shade faster than you expect, so you're not prepared." Other critics—notably Barbara



From a series of sketches executed in Kraków cafés in the early fifties, when the future director was between sixteen and eighteen years old.

DRAWINGS BY ROMAN POLANSKI

Leaming, who subtitled her 1981 biography of Polanski "The Filmmaker as Voyeur"—maintain that Polanski has never been interested so much in portraying violence as in exploring the queasy fascination that violence exerts upon viewers. He is interested not just in what it's like to gawk but also, and perhaps even more so, in what it's like to get caught gawking. By exploring violence in this way, he is, of course, not only implicating his audience but also replicating his own primordial experience—that of a spellbound child gazing upon horrors from deep in his hiding place, aware that at any moment he could get caught looking and suffer the direst of consequences.

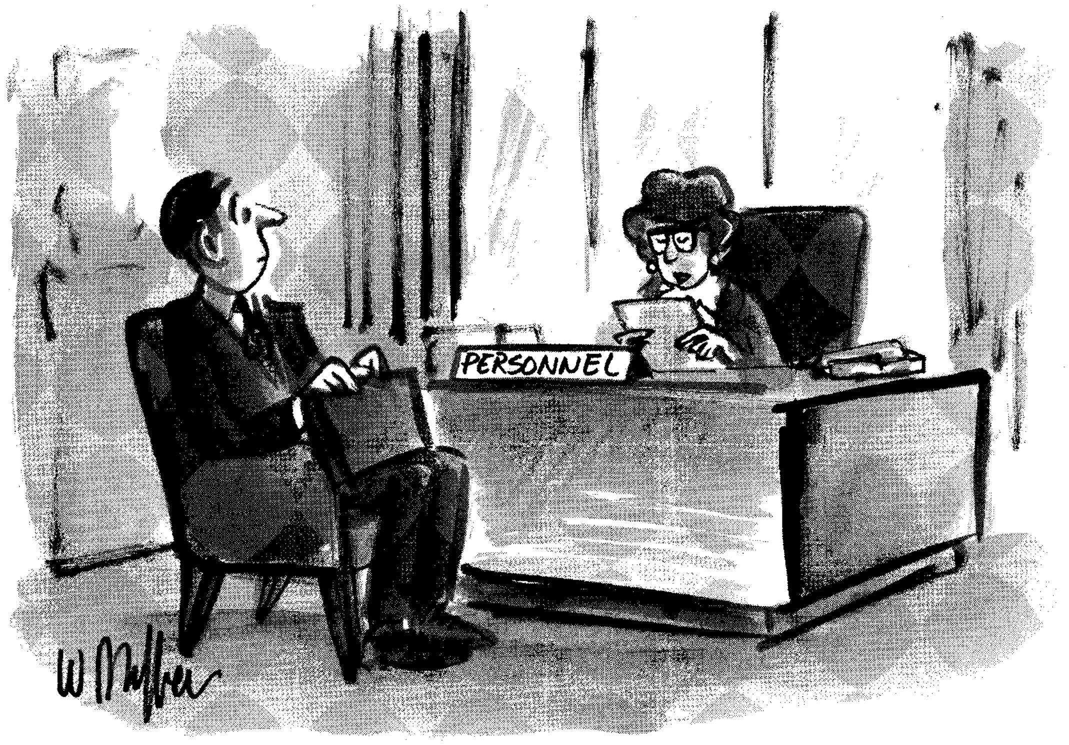
That child, unusually small, agile, and resourceful for his age, was soon managing to slip out of the Kraków ghetto through secret passageways on various smuggling runs. During those runs, he often sneaked into the outlying movie houses, which the occupying authorities were keeping well stocked with trashy Aryan romances. (He taught himself to read deciphering the Polish subtitles.) Such forays were doubly transgressive: not only did he have no business being outside the ghetto but the underground resistance had decreed a blanket boycott of the Nazi offerings, under the slogan "Only pigs go to the movies." Still, Roman couldn't keep away—especially after the ghetto's liquidation, when he was largely on his own and such movies came to constitute one of his few sources of solace.

Polanski's parents had made several attempts to place him with Gentile families outside the ghetto; in one instance, the Gentile family had quickly returned the boy but kept the money they had been paid as well as the suitcases containing all his clothing and his dearest belongings. Another time, returning to the ghetto, Roman learned that a few hours earlier his mother had been seized by Storm Troopers and taken away, along with others—no one knew where. (Only years later would he learn that she had been transported directly to Auschwitz and almost immediately gassed; some years after that, he found out that she had been four months pregnant at the time.) The Nazi strangulation of the ghetto proceeded relentlessly until the morning of the last action (the one so harrowingly depicted in Spielberg's film), in which Roman's father was seized. Even as that was happening, Ryszard managed to push Roman through a gap in the wall, and snapped "Shove off!" at him when he momentarily returned. Roman was not yet ten years old.

Alone outside the ghetto, the boy trudged from one refuge and near-disastrous scrape to another. Eventually, one of his anxious host families sent him off to the remote countryside, where he managed to scratch out an existence through the rest of the war by working for and sharing appallingly primitive quarters with an almost serflike peasant family. Although he was now relatively safe, a terrible loneliness sometimes overwhelmed him—the near-physical ache of missing his parents and wondering how they were faring.

As the war was ending, the eleven-year-old Roman made his way back to Kraków. An uncle who himself had just surfaced from hiding discovered him on the street, and for a time Roman lived with relatives and family friends—a dozen people in two rooms. He was a strange child, high-strung and sickly, yet stubborn and tempestuous. "For a long while, when he first arrived, anytime somebody would shout at him he'd break down crying or try to run away," his cousin Roma Ligocka recently recalled. "He could never submit to family life." Another member of the household commented, "He lacked manners, which is putting it mildly. He was very aggressive, loud, with an insatiable need to be the center of attention, constantly engaged in bratty pranks of one sort or another—and yet at the same time people were drawn to him. They were won over by his energy, his zest, his incredible storytelling ability, and his charm."

Several months after Roman returned to Kraków, his father reappeared, accompanied by a new girlfriend. Right away, relations between Ryszard and Roman proved volatile. "They were too much alike," his cousin Roma surmises. "They loved each other, but they couldn't stand each other, and the fights they'd get into . . . Sometimes I was afraid they were going to kill each other." Roman's perennially nasty treatment of Ryszard's girlfriend (and the complex of guilt and mourning and survivor's self-loathing—on both men's part—that underlay such behavior) didn't make matters any easier. Finally, more or less at the



"There are no medical or pension benefits, but the employees' lounge has excellent free coffee."

woman's insistence, Ryszard decided to establish his son, who had yet to turn fourteen, in an apartment of his own—a move that scandalized Ryszard's contemporaries, though today Roman says that he was himself quite happy about it. "It was a relief," he told me. "After you're twelve, thirteen, it's too late to have parents. You don't need them anymore."

During adolescence, Roman began steadying himself somewhat—in part, again, thanks to movies. He devoured them—particularly the imports from the West. He organized elaborately staged productions among neighborhood kids, with himself as writer, director, and star. In the late forties, he actually became something of a star on Kraków radio, where he was featured in a dramatic serial, as was the juvenile Louis Begley (then Ludwik Bieliński), who went on to become an international lawyer and the author of "Wartime Lies." Polanski soon moved on to film work as well; because of his small, wiry frame and his preternatural baby face, he was able for years to go on portraying characters considerably younger than he was, though they were almost invariably versions of his own pugnacious, street-tough persona, a role that he chillingly reprised, years later, in his notorious switchblade cameo in "Chinatown." ("The Polish male Shirley Temple" is how one veteran filmmaker described him to me.) In 1954, he won a featured role in "A Generation," Andrzej Wajda's first full-length film. "Roman was an insatiable presence on the set back then," Wajda, now the grand master of the Polish national cinema, recently recalled. "Voraciously interested in everything technical—lighting, film stock, makeup, camera optics—with no interest whatever, on the other hand, in the sorts of thematic concerns that obsessed the rest of us, like politics, Poland's place in the world, and, especially, our recent national past. He saw everything in front of him and nothing behind, his eyes firmly fixed on a future he already seemed to be hurtling toward, at maximum speed. And for him that future was out there, in the world, and particularly in Hollywood, which he equated with the world standard in cinema. Even then. And that was absolutely unique among us."

When I told Roman's cousin Roma of Wajda's formulation, she said, "Yes, Roman was hurtling forward, *like a rocket,* but it wasn't so much toward the future as away from the past."

By the mid-fifties, Roman had set his sights on the country's national film school in Lodz, though he decided to apply as a director rather than an actor. The school's administrators were at first dubious about admitting him—he already had a reputation for being "wild"—but at length he was accepted into the school's rigorous four-year program. From the beginning, he stood out. "There were many talented people there, but Roman seemed a rung above," Agnieszka Osiecka, who was a contemporary of Roman's at the film school and went on to become the country's most popular lyricist and poet, told me one day. "Everybody knew he was a genius—I'm not talking about that. Rather, he was the only one of us—and I include our professors, and, for that matter, all the other artists and writers in the country at that time—who was not provincial. Somehow, all the rest of us, coming from this poor, war-levelled Communist backwater—we felt ourselves parochial or peripheral, not fully entitled. But there was none of that in Roman. His was already the voice of a free man, who from the start felt himself equal to all the world. It was remarkable. And he was an absolutely optimistic creature. It's a strange talent, you know, to be happy. Many don't have it. But he was always full of good spirits. I never saw him melancholy."

I asked her if he had ever mentioned his experiences during the war.

"Never," she replied. "Perhaps there was a bit of that syndrome in him. You know: 'Well, that's over. Now let's be happy.' "

Janusz Morgenstern, a Lodz directing alumnus who was several classes ahead of Polanski, told me, "He was the motor behind countless parties, at which he himself did not drink. He was an unavoidable presence. He often engaged in practical jokes, which weren't intended so much to inflict cruelty as to allow him to study people's reactions." Once, for instance, he splashed a cup of hot tea onto Jerzy Kosinski's suit simply to gauge how someone as "well organized" as Kosinski would respond.

Mainly, however, Polanski concentrated on studying and making films. His remarkable suite of nervy, wildly original student productions, including the award-winning "Two Men and a Wardrobe," are still studied at Lodz and at film schools all around the world.

Soon after Polanski had completed his formal studies, he began developing the screenplay for "Knife in the Water," in collaboration with Jakub Goldberg and Jerzy Skolimowski, the other boy wonder of the Polish cinema at the time. For two years, the project was side-

THE TRAIN

I've been trying, my darling, to explain
to myself how it is that some freight train
loaded with ballast so a track may rest
easier in its bed should be what's roused

us both from ours, tonight as every night,
despite its being miles off and despite
our custom of putting to the very
back of the mind all that's customary

and then, since it takes forever to pass
with its car after car of coal and gas
and salt and wheat and rails and railway ties,

how it seems determined to give the lie
to the notion, my darling,
that we, not it, might be the constant thing.

—PAUL MULDOON

tracked by censors and bureaucrats, who weren't sure what to make of its disturbing story line involving the edgy, erotic triangulations of a smug, well-heeled middle-aged sportswriter, his shapely young wife, and a surly, rootless hitchhiker they pick up on their way to a sailing weekend. The bureaucrats knew how to deal with outright political opposition—they did that all the time—but this script seemed oblivious of political considerations of any sort, which, for them, was all the more disquieting. Finally, after intensive lobbying from Polanski's Lodz mentors, the project received a wary go-ahead.

"You can have no idea how liberating an experience 'Knife in the Water' was for the rest of us in the Polish cinema when it first came out, in 1962," Wajda told me. "Because, for the first time since the war, here was a film that didn't have anything to do with the war. It wasn't that Roman had contempt, exactly, for what we were doing—he just had no interest in it. He was all about starting afresh, and this was his answer: a film that truly could have taken place anywhere. I'm sure that that in part accounted for its breakthrough success abroad—the prize at the Venice festival, the cover of *Time*, the Oscar nomination."

The Polish critic Maria Kornatowska later expressed an opinion to me that, while apparently contradicting Wajda's, seemed no less astute. *All* Polanski's films, she insisted—including "Knife in the Water"—have been about the war and, in particular, about the simultaneous combination of claustrophobia and agoraphobia that characterized the ghetto experience. "In 'Knife in the Water,' for instance, the water only seems to be an open horizon," she pointed out. "In reality, it encloses and entraps absolutely. And that's the quintessential Polanskian universe."

"TONINO!" Polanski called over to his cinematographer, Tonino Delli Colli, a veteran of some of Fellini's, Pasolini's, and Louis Malle's greatest films—and a man even shorter than Polanski himself. ("That's how Roman likes all of his cameramen," one of his assistants confided.) "Tonino, what lens is that?" The twenty-two-millimetre, Tonino replied, after giving the camera a quick look. "O.K.," Polanski said, turning to Sigourney Weaver, without bothering to gaze through the eyepiece, "that means the frame will reach out to here, this will be the edge, and over here will be just out of the frame, so I want you to be standing here."

"And you can be sure he's right, *to the millimetre*," one awestruck crewman commented to me. He was quiet, shaking his head, and then he muttered a single word: "Lodz."

Whether it's the depth of his original training at Lodz or the breadth of his subsequent experience, the extent of Polanski's technical competence on the set is continually startling. One day, I saw him grab the kit out of his makeup artist's hands to redo the bleeding gash on Kingsley's forehead; a few minutes later, he was rejiggering the wiring of an electric-light source on the hidden side of a fake candle; a few minutes after that, he was coaching Sigourney Weaver's double on the proper way to hogtie an unconscious man ("Loop it like this, not like that"). One got the sense that, lacking a crew, he could have done it all by himself. And yet, at the same time, the fullhearted way he shouted "Guys! Guys!," bringing order to the set, was so exuberantly inclusive as to make you realize how vitally fulfilling the sense of collaboration, of being one of a band of fellow-troupers, is for this man, who, years ago, really was all by himself.

Polanski's expertise is not limited to the set. He is one of those authorities on everything—cars (his is a Mercedes 6.9, an older model and one of the most powerful ever built); road directions; skiing technique; the decline of cigars in Cuba; the proper way to save a choking victim, or to sew on a button; when the moon is at its brightest (just before a lunar eclipse) and why (the uniquely propitious angle of sunlight's reflection off its surface); the futility of those electric ultraviolet-light mosquito zappers (mosquitoes aren't attracted to light but to odor and humidity); the proper order for the various courses of any given meal. ("*Never eat fruit at the end of a* *meal!*") He can get to be a bit of a nudge with all this knowledge.

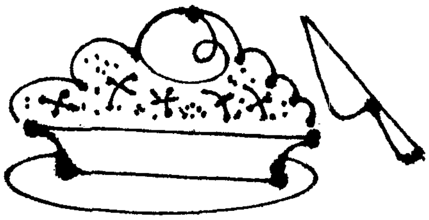
Polanski knows everything, and what he doesn't know he is avid to learn. He's an omnivorous reader and, on practical matters, an indefatigable questioner. (He has little use for abstract speculation.) In conversation, he winces occasionally, or seems on the verge of wincing—not a tic, exactly, but a reflex that seems to clear his head so that he can hook any stray new particle of information and instantly reel it in.

And he's curious about everything—everything, that is, except the particulars of his own life. He is one of the least introspective people I've ever met. He has stock stories about the various stages of his life, and, if asked, sometimes he'll even tell them; but this extraordinarily eventful life seems to hold very little interest for him. He has slight inclination to make fresh connections between stories, or worry out the wider themes that might unite them. He doesn't dwell, he moves on—and in fact, given the horrors of his life, that's probably how he's managed to survive at all. He's often commented that he'd be loath to enter psychoanalysis for fear that it might impede his creative process. And there's the rub, because for all his alleged indifference to the various deep motifs of his life, they continually come pouring out in his films.

AFTER the release of "Knife in the Water" and its international success, Polanski could probably have easily consolidated a major directing career in Poland. Instead, he established himself in Paris. Wajda recalls meeting up with him there around that time. "Roman's situation was incredibly difficult," he told me. "He was living in complete poverty, unemployed, his hopes suspended on the most enigmatic and tentative of promises from dubious would-be producers. But he was adamant: this was where he was going to build his future." He was also busy shedding his immediate past—the collapse of his first marriage, to a young Polish starlet named Barbara (Basia) Kwiatowska. When he had first laid eyes on her, in Lodz, a few years earlier, she was just eighteen: her face was pert, with high Slavic cheekbones and sparkling eyes; her body was incredibly sultry; she was, in short, the perfect girl-woman for this eternal man-child. Although he was awkward in his dealings with women, he made a wildly flamboyant run at her, and they were soon married. But their relationship was fraught from the start, perhaps the biggest problem being his own extravagantly hypocritical expectations: he was having affairs all the while, but whenever he suspected her of following suit he flew into a rage. Soon she began really having affairs, and in the end it was she who dumped him.

Licking his wounds in Paris, Polanski fell in with a would-be screenwriter named Gérard Brach, who was also recently divorced, and they began collaborating on the screenplay for a claustrophobic little comedy of cuckoldry and desperation, which eventually became "Cul-de-Sac." In the meantime, after his triumph at the Venice International Film Festival, Polanski's reputation grew; he and Brach were invited to England to work up a genre horror-thriller for a low-budget production company. London was on the eve of its swinging revival—the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, acid, free love, and the Playboy Club—and Polanski strode onto the scene as if at last he were entering his own element: precisely the liberated West that he had fled Poland to find.

Polanski taught himself English with astonishing speed, the better to go courting English girls, whom he found "more straightforward and less calculating than any I'd known." Indeed, as he wrote in his 1984 memoirs, "for the first time in my life I began to feel truly at ease with the opposite sex." Which is to say that he found the voice that would characterize his casual relationships with women for decades to come. As one of his friends from that time commented, "he'd be hitting on girls constantly, in this way that was somehow incredibly vulgar and deeply charming at the same time." The crowd he fell in with—particularly a group of Hollywood Americans, including Warren Beatty and Robert Towne—seemed obsessed with sex. As another acquaintance put it, "Roman treated women like so many Scouting badges." He was probably no worse, though, than many of the others in his group.



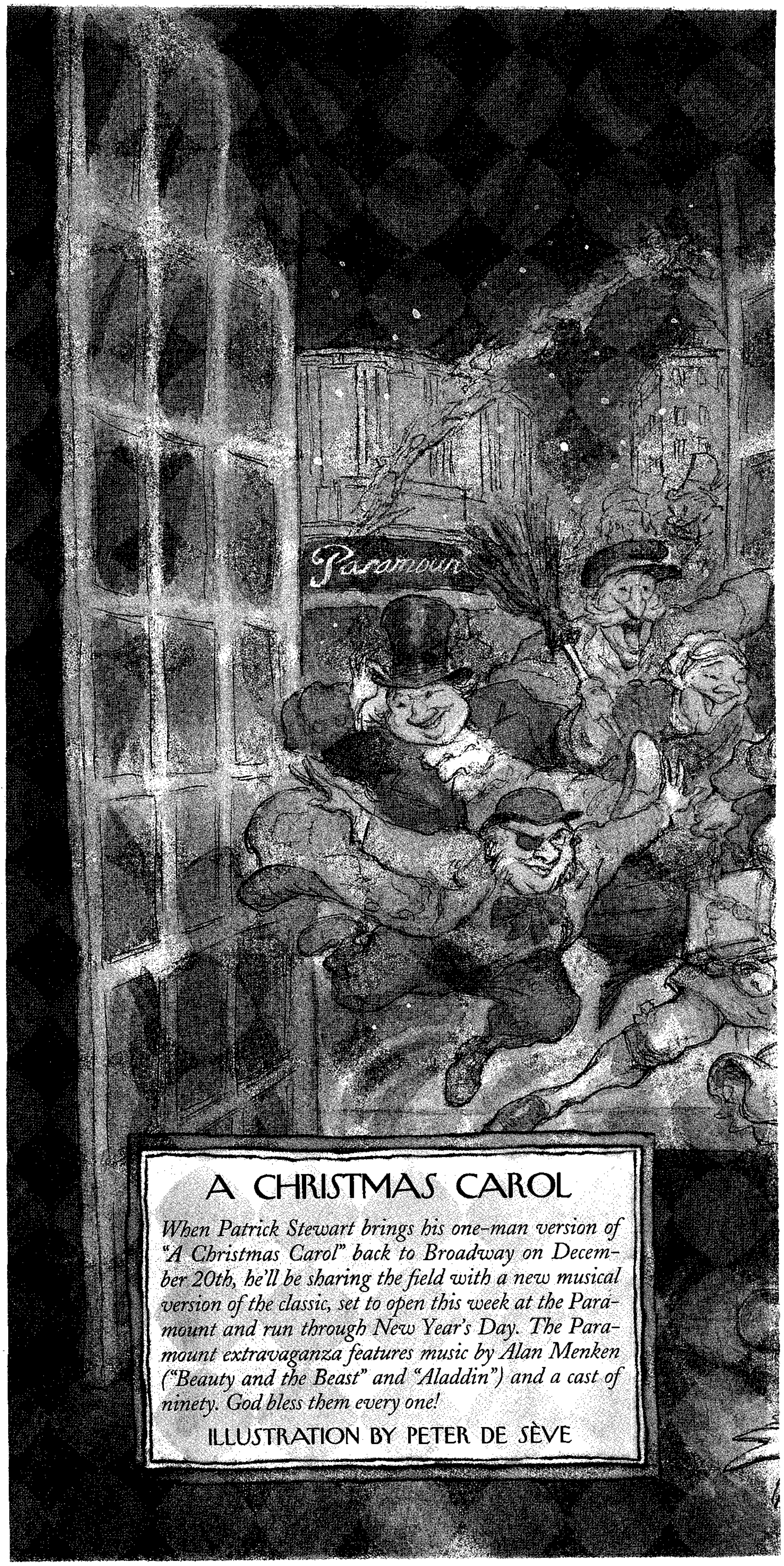
But it was he who, in 1965, turned around and made "Repulsion," his startling reinvention and reinvigoration of the horror genre, a film that is virtually protofeminist in the intensity of its identification with the inner experience of a beautiful young woman—the young innocent played by Catherine Deneuve, who is gradually going quite mad under the only partly imagined impression that everybody is constantly hitting on her. Nor would the film's feminism prove to be a unique case: "Rosemary's Baby," "The Tenant," "Tess," and now "Death and the Maiden" all come to mind. "Throughout his career, Roman has shown this incredible understanding of and almost identification with women in their victimhood," María Angélica Dorfman, the playwright's wife, commented over dinner one evening in Paris. At which point another of our dinner companions countered, "Well, yes, maybe, but it's hardly a feminist stance to always be portraying women as victims, and, anyway, he himself is usually the one who's doing the victimizing—in the sense of treating women like mere objects. It's not a simple claim." Nor is Polanski's treatment of women a simple matter. The membrane between victim and victimizer is unusually porous throughout Polanski's films, as it has been throughout his life, and nowhere was this more tellingly evoked than right near the outset of his career, in "Repulsion," by the end of which the Deneuve character has become the ghastliest victimizer of all. The principal expression of her onrushing madness is walls: apparently ordinary walls that suddenly lurch, erupt, obtrude, encroach—and we are, of course, right back in the ghetto.

After the modest commercial success of "Repulsion" and the more limited, art-house success of "Cul-de-Sac," Polanski tried to steer more into the mainstream with his next feature, a horror spoof titled "The Fearless Vampire Killers." The attempt proved a fiasco: he lost control of the film's final cut and disowned the version that got released. But while working on that picture he had fallen in love with its female lead—a sweet, wholesome, guileless American named Sharon Tate. At the time, friends couldn't help noting that the blonde bore a striking resemblance to Basia, but Roman was taken with her forbearance—she didn't cramp his style, particularly with regard to his ongoing extracurricular activities. "She was a fucking angel," he would say, in his grief, a few years later.

At this point, Robert Evans, the young head of production at Paramount Pictures, invited Polanski to Hollywood to discuss a new project. Impressed by his work on "Repulsion," Evans felt that Polanski would be just the man to tackle what he had in mind: the screen adaptation of a sensational, as yet unpublished novel by Ira Levin. It was a canny intuition, for in many ways "Rosemary's Baby" was going to do for pregnancy what "Repulsion" had done for chastity, except that where Deneuve's experience in "Repulsion" was plainly delusional, Mia Farrow's in "Rosemary's Baby" was considerably less so: it was the world itself, and not she, that appeared to be descending into madness. "*This is no dream! This is really happening!*" she screams in the film's most startling scene, as she wakes abruptly from a half-drugged stupor to find herself in the midst of a satanic séance, being given over to the Devil himself. The lines could serve as the motto for Polanski's entire film history, and for his life.

As Polanski undertook the screenwriting and preproduction for the project, he and Sharon (soon to be his wife) moved from London to Hollywood. Eight years out of Lodz, Roman had risen bodily into Heaven, and was doing, as he later wrote, "what I most wanted to do, in the film capital of the world."

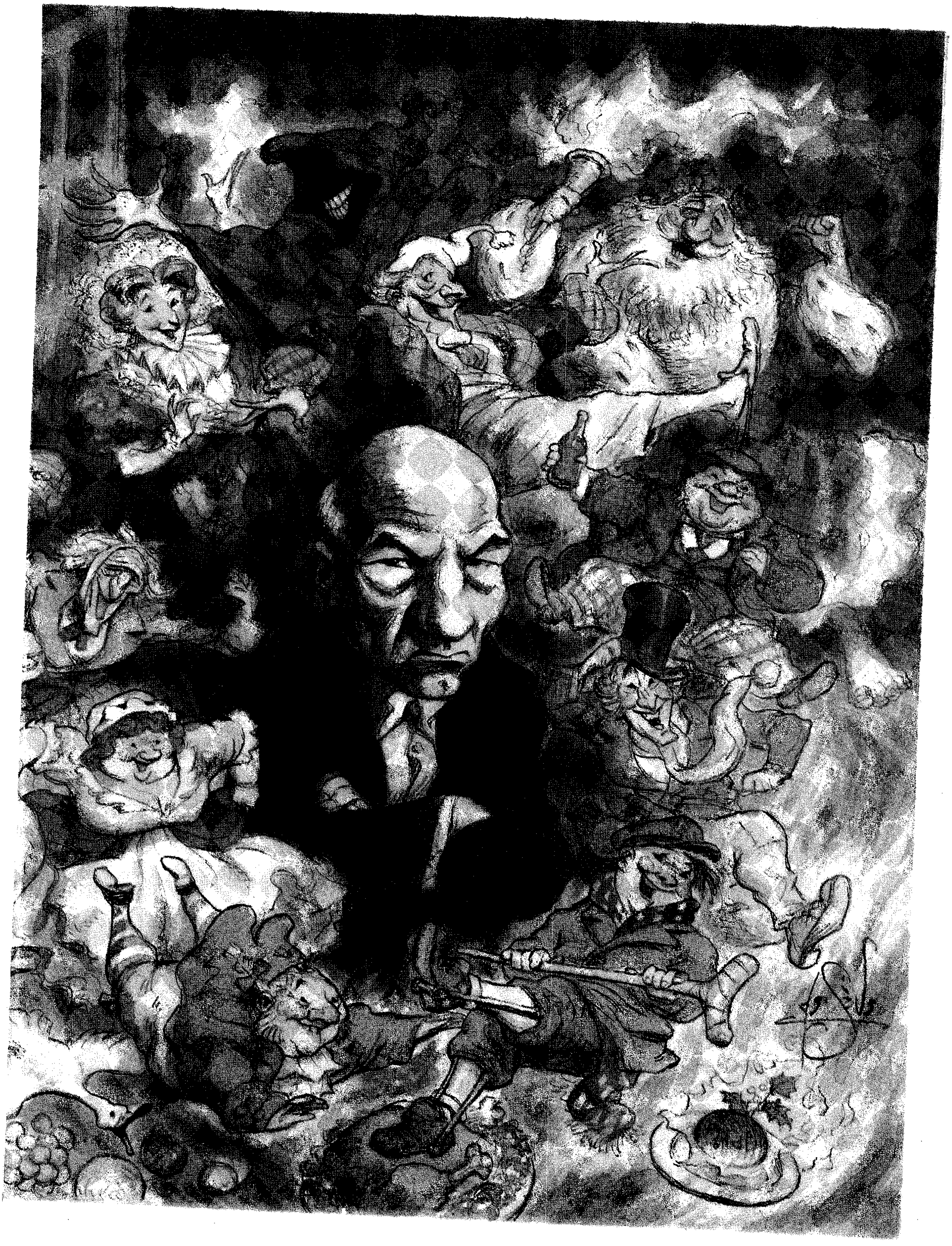
While Polanski layered his film with autobiographical allusions of the sort he invariably denies (the image of a pregnant woman being dragged away by beefy male authority figures was hardly a neutral image for a man with Polanski's wartime experience), he also added grace notes that seem positively gleeful in their wickedly immediate self-reference. The motor of the story is the overweening ambition of the Mia Farrow character's husband, a marginal actor who sells his soul to the Devil for the prospect of success in Hollywood. Or not his soul, exactly—rather, his wife's womb, and the couple's firstborn child. "To the Year One," the members of the coven chant, toasting the New Year (in a joshing reference, perhaps, to Polanski's own arrival in Hollywood), while



A CHRISTMAS CAROL

When Patrick Stewart brings his one-man version of "A Christmas Carol" back to Broadway on December 20th, he'll be sharing the field with a new musical version of the classic, set to open this week at the Paramount and run through New Year's Day. The Paramount extravaganza features music by Alan Menken ("Beauty and the Beast" and "Aladdin") and a cast of ninety. God bless them every one!

ILLUSTRATION BY PETER DE SÈVE



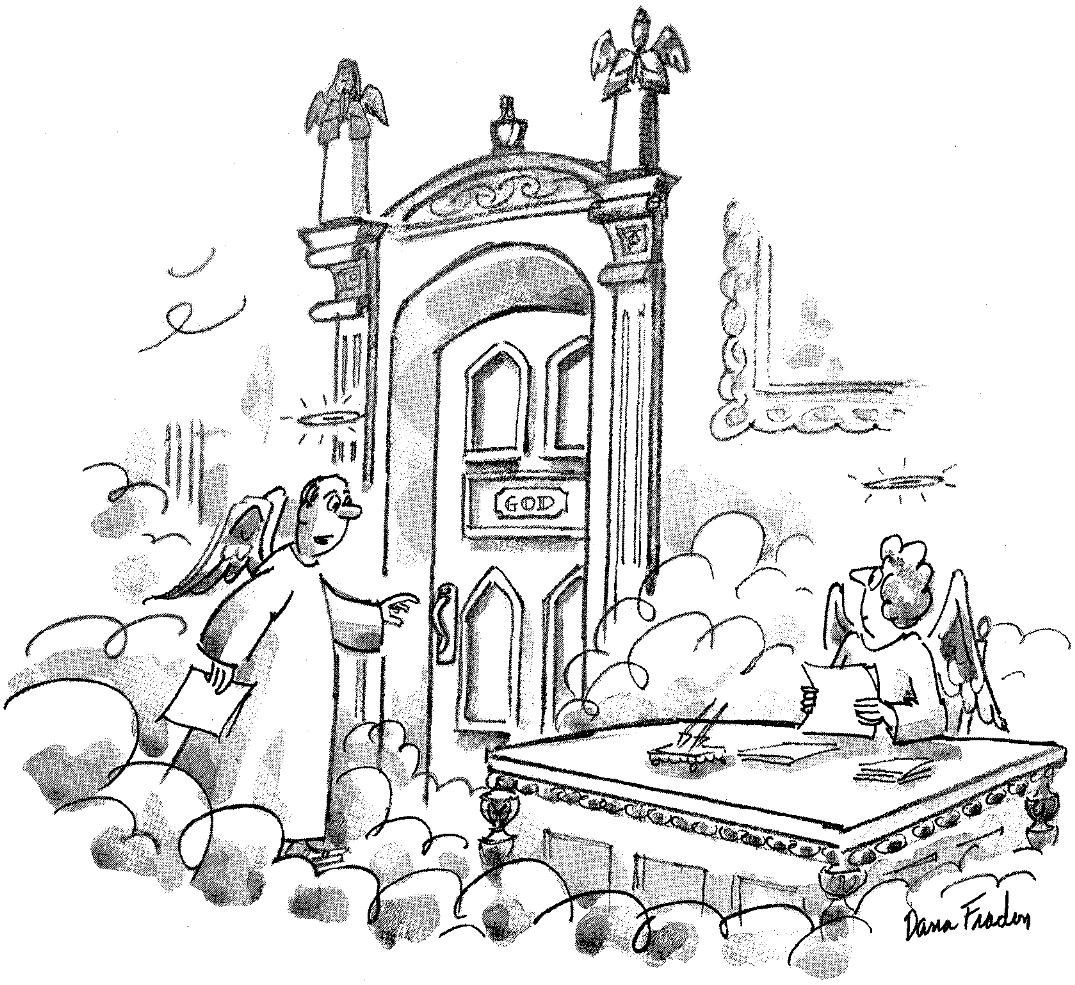
back in the actor's apartment the phones are already ringing off the hook: "Paramount is within an inch of where we want them," Rosemary's husband exults. What might have been merely playfully perverse when the film opened—in June, 1968, to glowing reviews and blockbuster success—within a little more than a year would come to seem darkly premonitory.

While "Rosemary's Baby" was still enjoying its success, Sharon announced that she was expecting. It was not a planned pregnancy—not on Roman's part, at least—but Sharon was ecstatic, and gradually, he maintains, he also warmed to the notion. In February of 1969, in anticipation of the birth, the couple moved to larger quarters—a sprawling ranch-style estate at the end of a cul-de-sac off Cielo Drive in Benedict Canyon, whose prior tenants had been Terry Melcher, the record-producer son of Doris Day, and his girlfriend, Candice Bergen.

Six months later, Polanski was in London working on a new film script—and also repeatedly postponing his return, in ambivalent anticipation of the baby's arrival—when, on the evening of August 9, 1969, he answered the phone and received word of the disaster: Sharon was dead, along with four others and the eight-month-old fetus (a boy) in Sharon's belly. They had all died in an unspeakably savage and gruesome manner, the victims of multiple knife wounds. "No! No! No! No!" Polanski howled, slamming his head against the wall. A doctor shot him full of tranquillizers, and, thus sedated, he arrived in Hollywood thirty-six hours later, in time for the funeral.

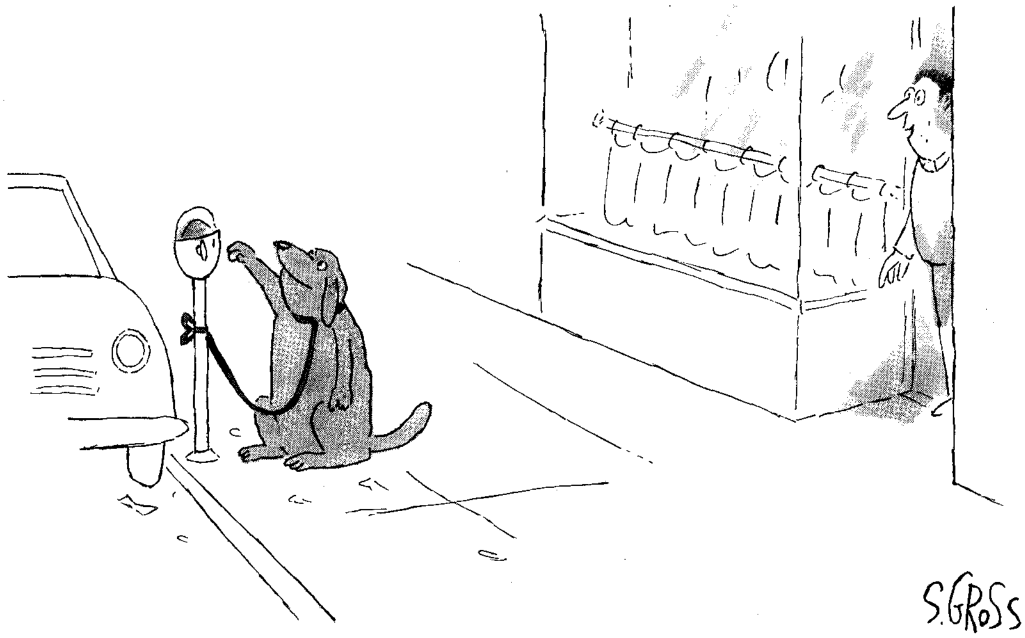
It wasn't until late November that the Los Angeles police finally cracked the case. In the meantime, a frenzy swept through Hollywood and the country, fanned by a sensationalist press that, for lack of any solid leads, turned on the victims themselves, titillating readers with fantastic, largely untethered speculations regarding "drugs, mysticism and off-beat sex" (*Newsweek*), and thereby—as Polanski himself came to feel—"killing the victims all over again a second time." *Time* reported pseudo-judiciously, "How much of a role drugs played in their world is hard to discern." The article went on to point out that Polanski "is noted for his macabre movies." This last motif—what Polanski summarized as the "they made those movies, therefore they must have lived that life, hence they deserved to die that death" refrain—began to permeate public perceptions of the case, especially in Hollywood, which, as a community, sought to put as much daylight as possible between itself and Polanski: yesterday's box-office hero was suddenly transformed into "an evil, profligate dwarf"—his characterization of their characterization. "He would be excommunicated by Hollywood because his wife had the bad taste to be murdered in the papers," his friend Jack Nicholson said later.

That Polanski survived the horror of those months is remarkable; that he went on to create some of the greatest works of his career in the years *immediately following* is even more so. Surely Robert Towne is right when he says of Polanski, "His resilience was rooted in his personal history. What he had already survived prepared him to withstand the shock of this new disaster." But it is also the case that Polanski survived the fresh holocaust much as he had his first—by adopting an ironclad, almost colorless interpretation of the events. In this instance, he convinced himself that Manson, a would-be rock singer and songwriter, had sent his raiding party to that particular house on Cielo Drive in order to exact vengeance upon Terry Melcher, who, as a record producer, had spurned his offerings, and that the attack on Tate and the others was



"Is he the God of the Old or the New Testament this morning?"

thus random, and had had nothing to do with him or Tate.



"Good dog!"

• •

That Manson knew that Melcher no longer lived there, that he may even have known that Polanski did (and, according to the admittedly tenuous argument of a recent biography of Manson published in England, that he may have specifically targeted the director, out of satanist pique at his portrayal of the One True Deity in "Rosemary's Baby")—these are the sorts of speculation that Polanski to this day cannot abide. I learned as much when I tried to raise some of them in conversation. "Bullshit! *Bullshit!* It had nothing to do with any of that," he insisted. "Manson was targeting Melcher—that's all there is to it. He was an artist spurned, and it can be a very, very dangerous thing to spurn a certain kind of artist. Think of Hitler."

As usual, it was in his films that, for all his protestations to the contrary, Polanski explored more nuanced and equivocal interpretations of such autobiographical issues. By the spring of the following year, 1970, he was already hard at work on a new project, in collaboration with the National Theatre's Kenneth Tynan—a film adaptation of "Macbeth." Though he maintained that the choice of material had absolutely nothing to do with his own recent life (that's why he had chosen Shakespeare, he said: precisely to shield himself from such easy calumnies), the spectre of Cielo Drive hangs over the film from its first scene, as a trio of witches (a beauty alongside two wrinkled hags) bury a severed hand, a knife, and a noose in a bloody hole in the ground. The scene carried its contemporary viewers straight back into the world (and, specifically, the ending) of "Rosemary's Baby" and almost dared them *not* to make the connection with it, and with everything that had happened in between. Meanwhile, in an uncanny way, the focus of dramatic and empathic intensity in Polanski's version gradually shifted from Macbeth and Lady Macbeth to Macduff—to the horrible murder of Macduff's family and, particularly, to the fiercely imagined intensity of Macduff's experience as he learns of those murders so far away:

> Ross: Your castle is surpris'd; your wife and babes, savagely slaughter'd.
>
> Macduff: Merciful heaven! . . . My children, too?
>
> Ross: Wife, children, servants, all that could be found.
>
> Macduff: And I must be from thence! My wife kill'd too? . . . All my pretty ones? Did you say all?

When Terence Bayler, the actor playing Macduff, differed with Polanski over a fine point of interpretation during the shooting of this scene, Polanski blew up. "No, you'll do it this way," he declared. "*I know.*"

One afternoon over lunch recently, the novelist Rafael Yglesias, who has lately been writing film scripts (including a celebrated adaptation of his own novel "Fearless"), recalled for me his decidedly mixed feelings when some studio executives first asked him if he would be interested in collaborating with Polanski in adapting "Death and the Maiden" for the screen. "I immediately said yes, with fear," Yglesias told me, adding that his trepidation seemed to have been made up of equal parts awe and anxiety. The anxiety increased during the weeks before their first meeting, as one Hollywood figure after another warned Yglesias that Polanski loved seeing how much of a fool he could make of any new acquaintance—that he delighted in corrupting people, getting them to drop acid, say, or launch into ill-advised affairs and various other depravities.

Once he got to Paris, however, Yglesias said, things seemed to go well, to his relief, and yet his anxieties persisted, just below the surface, through much of the first week. "And then, one afternoon," he recalled, "we were working up in his apartment, as usual, and we'd really been at it and both of us were starting to feel a bit tired, and suddenly he announces, 'Maybe we should have something to pick us up.' I told him that coffee would be just fine for me. 'No, no, no, no,' he says. 'Coffee's bad for you. Terrible. No, I'll get us something.' He got up and left the room, and I experienced several moments' panic before he emerged from his kitchen, a broad smile spread across his face, with a pint of Häagen-Dazs ice cream and two spoons. And that became a daily ritual."

Yglesias continued, "It was a great, great experience working with him. Between August and October, we went through several drafts, and his notes were always incredibly specific. Why does he make the call now, here, instead of later, there, which might work better for these—one, two, three—reasons? And the only thing I had to prove to him was that my way was *real*—not that it was more commercial or more sympathetic or less expensive but that somebody would really do it that way. And we'd act it out, right there in his living room. Nothing was left for the set. Like Hitchcock, he wanted it all blocked out in advance. Endlessly, repeatedly, we'd read the script out loud, taking on the different roles. I remember one time we got to the point where the gun gets loose and Paulina"—the Sigourney Weaver character—"screams at her husband, 'Get the gun!' And suddenly Roman was wondering, 'Is that right? Would she say that—"Get the gun"—or would she say, "Get it"?' I said I didn't know. 'Let's read it,' he said. So I went back a couple of pages and started in, and he said, 'No, no, go back to the beginning of the scene'—*fifteen pages!* So we went back, read the whole scene through, one way, then the other, then back to the first—it was an hour and a half before we finally made up our minds about one word!"

I mentioned the autobiographical resonances in the story and asked whether Polanski had spoken much about his own life.

"A bit," Yglesias said. "But only in a practical context—never just telling stories to be telling stories. At one point, for instance, we got to the sequence in Ariel's version where the wife knocks out the doctor and he stays unconscious through the rest of the night. 'That's total bullshit,' Roman said. 'It's very hard, you know, to knock someone out. See this? See this here?' He lifted his hair back to show me some scars. 'Man tried to kill me once, and he had to hit me five times with a rock—hard—before he finally knocked me out, and even then I was out for only a few moments. It's not that easy to knock someone out.'

"Another time when he brought up his life, we were sitting at a restaurant, and I'd been saying that I didn't quite believe Paulina's reaction to the doctor's arrival at their house. Always, that was the only issue: Is it believable? I figured that her first reaction upon hearing that voice again would be to bolt, to run away, and only afterward might she realize that actually, in this situation, *she* was in command, at which point she'd return. 'Has anyone ever done anything really horrible to you?' Roman asked. 'Something you could never forgive? Believe me, if such a person from my life were to come walking down that street out there right now, I'd leap from this table and chase right after him.' Yeah, I said, but that was because we were in a restaurant in the middle of the day in the middle of a city. What if it were late at night in a remote cabin? He paused for a few moments, chewing. 'Yeah,' he finally said. 'You're right—I'd run.' But, I mean, the disparity in our life experiences! There he was thinking of Manson, and I was thinking of two kids making fun of my dog."

IN 1974, a few years after "Macbeth," Polanski allowed himself to be lured back to Hollywood by Paramount's Robert Evans, who had a new project for him—a brilliant, sprawling script by Robert Towne, titled "Chinatown." Towne and Polanski struggled together for weeks to wrest a coherent shooting script from Towne's delirious profusion of ideas and material. On the first day of the shoot, a stressed-out Polanski emerged from his car, threw up, and set to work. The days after that were fraught with difficulties—explosive confrontations between Polanski and Jack Nicholson (quickly patched over), and between Polanski and Faye Dunaway (only barely patched over), and then, on the last day of shooting, when Polanski radically altered the script's ending, between Polanski and Towne (who vowed at the time that he would never work with Polanski again). From this chaotic welter of cross-purposes emerged a film of great clarity (even Towne himself today prefers Polanski's ending), a film that was very much of its moment—somehow, Polanski's private wrestlings with the intractability of evil resonated with the entire country's in the wake of Vietnam and Watergate—and yet has stood the test of time. " 'Chinatown' has passed into legend and is regarded by many as an almost perfect film," the critic Peter Biskind noted recently.

As for the ending, Towne, in his original version, had had the Faye Dunaway character killing her father (and incestuous tormentor), the creepy John Huston character, before he could get his hands on the barely pubescent child whom he had sired upon her and whom she was desperately endeavoring to protect. Instead, Polanski had the Faye Dunaway character herself getting gruesomely killed right in front of the child, whom the Huston character now enveloped in his oily embrace, leading her away as Jack Nicholson's detective character looked on ineffectually and a police pal muttered, "Forget it, Jake, it's Chinatown."

Towne later said that at the time he figured Polanski had made the film end that way because "for Roman, that was life—beautiful blondes always die in L.A. Sharon had, just five years earlier." Perhaps. But a throwaway line in Polanski's autobiography suggests that even deeper associations may have been at work, for he notes that the reason he was drawn to cast Dunaway in the first place was that she possessed a "special brand of 'retro' beauty—the same sort of look I remembered in my mother." The film's ending compressed all that autobiography, but in retrospect it would seem to have featured an uncannily premonitory aspect as well: after all, the spectacle of a dirty old man embracing a barely pubescent girl would precisely foreshadow the perception the public was to have of Polanski himself just three years later.

EVER since Tate's murder, Polanski's relations with women had become tainted with both threat and betrayal. Far from seeking to avoid sexual involvements, however, he immersed himself in them to an unprecedented degree. He generally kept the affairs brief, tended to steer well clear of serious romance, and chose younger and younger girls.

This was no doubt partly a matter of the times; by the mid-seventies girls were routinely becoming sexually active at earlier and earlier ages. Also, the circles Polanski moved in consisted largely of aging men who enjoyed boasting to one another of their conquests and prized extreme youthfulness. In Polanski's case, however, more pronounced urgencies also seemed to be at work. For many years, he told me, he shied away from relations with mature women, for fear of betraying Sharon's memory. Younger women posed less of a risk of commitment and parenthood—prospects that seemed increasingly daunting to him.

At any rate, the relationship he forged, in the fall of 1976, with a fifteen-year-old beauty named Nastassja Kinski—a startling Tate look-alike—was hardly his first such foray, though in her case the affair shifted into professional patronage. When he was invited by French *Vogue* to serve as guest editor of that year's Christmas issue, it was Nastassja he featured, in a group of photographs taken in the Seychelles Islands.

After the success of his *Vogue* layout, Polanski was approached by the magazine's brother publication, *Vogue Hommes*, to produce a layout on the theme of "young girls of the world"—girls, that is, in the thirteen-year-old range. Or so Polanski claims. (The *Vogue Hommes* people subsequently tried to distance themselves as far as they could from the entire scheme.) Precisely what happened a few months later in Los Angeles when Polanski ended up bedding a thirteen-year-old girl he was auditioning for that photography spread has always been a bit difficult to pin down. Certain facts are common to all versions: the girl's leaked statements at the time, and Polanski's rejoinders then and seven years later, in a long chapter of his autobiography (now suppressed as part of a civil-suit settlement that also keeps him from discussing the case). Having somehow heard of the girl, Polanski did some preliminary shooting at her home and then received her mother's permission to drive the girl elsewhere for some location shots; the two of them ended up at Jack Nicholson's empty house, where, continuing the shoot, Polanski offered the girl champagne as she gradually shed her clothes, specifically for a sequence in Nicholson's hot tub, with Polanski presently joining her in the water. From there, they ended up in the guest bedroom and had extended sexual relations, after which Polanski drove the girl home and went on with his evening as if nothing untoward had happened.

The girl subsequently told the Los Angeles police that Polanski had been blatantly predatory from the start, engaging in lewd conversation even on the drive out, and that thereafter he had got her drunk and drugged (on half a Quaalude) so as to overcome her protests. For his part, in the autobiographical version, and according to statements made at the time, Polanski said that the girl herself began talking, in the car, about her extensive experiences with both sex and drugs, and that all their interactions thereafter were consensual. But even he is hard-pressed, in the book version, to account for the asthma attack the girl suffered in the middle of the proceedings, which she subsequently told police had constituted a desperate ruse to get him to knock it off.

Who knows exactly what happened? Perhaps the girl, starstruck and flattered and tipsy as well, initially consented to Polanski's flirtations; at some point, however, she apparently tried to get him to stop, and he either didn't hear or wouldn't take heed. In a sense, the question is moot: the entire theory of statutory rape rests on the notion that girls under a certain age are intrinsically incapable of giving morally informed consent in the first place.

At any rate, Polanski was arrested the following day and was soon indicted on six counts, including "unlawful sexual intercourse," "rape by use of drugs," committing a "lewd and lascivious act" on a child, and "sodomy." Trial was set for August 9th—the eighth anniversary of Tate's murder. With the arrest, the media seemed to exult in unison: Polanski *was* an evil, profligate dwarf after all! Nor did Polanski help his cause during the media firestorm by adopting a dismissive, Continental air toward reporters' queries about the charges. To borrow the jargon of a later era, he never did seem to get it.

For all his bravado and his proclaimed eagerness to present his own version in open court, Polanski was soon facing mounting pressures, not the least of which was terror at the prospect of imprisonment. The prosecution, for its part, was also facing pressures to cut a deal, including independent confirmation that the girl was neither a sexual nor a pharmacological novice. More to the point, her family was increasingly reluctant to allow her to testify at all in the face of so much ugly publicity. At the last moment, a deal was struck: Polanski would plead guilty to a single charge—the least serious one, that of "unlawful sexual intercourse." At the next morning's hearing, the girl's family's

Wm Hamilton

"We just think Zeke here can really give us that microbrewery feel."

RATTY GO BATTY

Look what your God has done to me.
—*Dracula.*

What a joke, this planet. The inmates
running the asylum. See them
in their little cars, whizzing? Stop
and go! Riding the escalators, flashing

their shiny finery, hoarding,
hawking. Wearing dark glasses
indoors. The rest of the animals
continue rational, sleeping in caves

or nests in winter, pursuing food, marking
territory clearly. None of this
petulance. What can be done
to restore order? Give the government

over to the insects, for the tidy digestion
of all that dung, give the infants
to the higher mammals
with the softest fur. Let it be done.

—CAROLINE FRASER

lawyer read a statement endorsing the deal and, furthermore, declared that "incarceration of the defendant" had never been his clients' goal.

Then things really began to turn weird. The judge—Laurence J. Rittenband, of the Santa Monica Superior Court—accepted the plea but deferred sentencing pending reports by a probation officer and two psychiatrists. When, a few months later, these all came back surprisingly sympathetic to Polanski and unanimous in their recommendation against incarceration of any sort, Rittenband angrily threw them out as a "whitewash" and, in a highly unusual—even an eccentric—move, sentenced the director to ninety days in a state psychiatric prison in Chino, ostensibly for evaluation; in fact, however, Rittenband expressed the intention of having that evaluative process, however long it might actually take, serve as Polanski's entire sentence.

Polanski reported to Chino on December 19th; the evaluative process took forty-two days (he was given a clean bill of psychiatric health), and on January 29, 1978, he was released, badly shaken by the experience but at least believed that, having served his time and met the Judge's requirements (or so he thought), he could begin putting the affair behind him. The Judge, however, had other ideas. His in-camera comments to the lawyers, as well as his statements to the press, had been getting increasingly vitriolic, almost vindictive, and in many instances flagrantly injudicious; for example, he indicated that what he really wanted to see happen was for the director to be deported permanently (though Polanski's eventual status with federal immigration authorities was none of this state judge's business). On January 30th, he informed the lawyers that he had indeed changed his mind and would now be sending Polanski back to prison for the remaining forty-eight days, followed by "an indeterminate sentence"—one that could be cut short at any time, but only if Polanski agreed to be deported, voluntarily and permanently. On being informed of this development, Polanski could no longer see the point of sticking around. Why go back to prison if he was going to be expelled from the country after his release? Why not just leave? Ignoring his lawyer's advice that he keep calm as they appealed the Judge's upcoming ruling, Polanski drove to the airport and booked the only remaining seat on that evening's last flight to London. Once he arrived there, he didn't stay long: back in Los Angeles a deputy district attorney, branding Polanski a fugitive felon, had declared, "We've got the dogs out, the hounds are on his trail. . . . We will extradite Polanski from anywhere, as long as there's a treaty." With Britain, there was an extradition treaty, but in France, where he was a naturalized citizen, he would be safe. Within forty-eight hours, Polanski was in Paris.

In Los Angeles, a furious Judge Rittenband moved to sentence Polanski in absentia, but before he could do so Polanski's lawyers filed a detailed petition to have Rittenband disqualified from the case on the grounds of bias and prejudice. Surprisingly, the prosecutors declined to contest the factual assertions upon which the petition was based, but before the lawyers could obtain a ruling on the matter, Rittenband, while denying any such bias, agreed to permit the case to be assigned to another judge. The new judge declared that he had no intention of revisiting the case in Polanski's absence, and it was removed from the court's active calendar, pending Polanski's return to Los Angeles. The district attorney, however, made it clear that the only way Polanski would ever be allowed to return to Los Angeles would be in handcuffs. And there the matter has stood to this day.

IN Paris, I suggested to Polanski that one lingering problem with the whole affair might be that, because of his ferocious sense of pride, people never got a sense that he felt any deep remorse for what had happened between him and the thirteen-year-old girl. To my surprise, he rose to the bait. (True to his post-suit settlement, he never had before.)

"What am I supposed to do?" he said. "Go around wearing a hair shirt? That I feel sorry about it I said years ago. I did everything. How many times do I have to say this, just to satisfy so-called public opinion? And why do I have to do what public opinion says is right? It's often wrong. Just the other day, I was reading that twenty million Americans don't even believe that man ever walked on the moon."

Back in the days when Polanski was still allowed to talk about the case to reporters, he used to complain that the girl wasn't even exactly thirteen—she was just a few weeks shy of fourteen. "And there's a big difference," he would insist. "It's not like the difference between, say, forty-one and forty-two."

Of course, the point is that by the time Polanski was nearly fourteen he hadn't been a child for some time.

"No more peanuts until you buy another round of drinks."

"DEATH AND THE MAIDEN" is not the first film in which Polanski has confronted the issue of rape and its aftermath. Upon arriving in Paris angry and broke in 1978, immediately after his Los Angeles debacle, he set about trying to rustle up a new film project, and the vehicle he chose—once again drawing on a classic in the wake of a private catastrophe—was a novel that Sharon Tate had recommended to him in one of their last conversations: Thomas Hardy's "Tess of the d'Urbervilles." (The film he eventually made of it is dedicated to her.) Hardy's story is one of a beautiful young country girl ("She had an attribute which amounted to a disadvantage," Hardy writes, ". . . a luxuriance of aspect, a fulness of growth, which made her appear more of a woman than she really was"), who is systematically seduced by an older man, a libertine whose ultimate act of mastery is really more a rape than a seduction. The violation in effect destroys her life, for which destruction she eventually kills him. Polanski did not flinch in any way from portraying the relentless tragedy of the victimized girl's fate. But despite the superficial ways in which he seemed to be suggesting his own identification with the girl's rapist, Alec d'Urberville (and, through his portrayal of Alec's eventual murder, in some way expiating his own guilt), Polanski really seemed to identify even more with Tess herself. "I see a lot of Roman in Tess," Polanski's star, Nastassja Kinski, told a reporter at the time of the film's release. "He is very much like her."

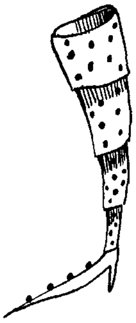
"Tess" proved both a critical and a commercial triumph, and so did Polanski's next venture—a fresh stage production, first in Warsaw and then in Paris, of Peter Shaffer's "Amadeus," with Polanski directing and taking on the lead as well: Mozart, the genius as eternal brat. And yet by then—in 1982 and into 1983—he seemed to have subsided into a kind of funk. It was as if the rocket that had come hurtling out of Kraków were finally sputtering out. Against this backdrop, he composed his autobiography, an oddly attenuated piece of work which, for all its surfeit of narrative incident, reveals a sense of hollowness, of being cored out. "Sharon's death is the only watershed in my life that really matters," Polanski wrote. "Before she died, I sailed a boundless, untroubled sea of expectations and optimism. Afterward, whenever conscious of enjoying myself, I felt guilty." In the book's final chapter he concluded, "I still go through the motions of being a professional entertainer, still tell funny stories and act them out to best effect, still laugh a lot and enjoy the company of people who laugh, but I know in my heart of hearts that the spirit of laughter has deserted me."

Shortly after Polanski completed his autobiography, his father visited him in Paris and fell ill with cancer. The two men had grown much closer in the years after Tate's death: both, after all, had lost wives to madmen. Ryszard stayed on in Paris with Roman through his final days. "For me, the death of my father was very terrible," Polanski told me one afternoon in his office. "It was, in a way, my last connection with Poland, with that which makes you feel still young. I always had this feeling of still being somehow juvenile until my father died. Afterward, that was somehow no longer the case."

I asked him if his father had lived to meet Emmanuelle.

He thought for a few moments. "No," he replied. "No, I met her shortly after his death."

Emmanuelle Seigner, who would become Polanski's third wife, was eighteen years old when she was introduced to him, by a casting agent who thought she might do for an upcoming part. Her grandfather Louis Seigner had been one of the legendary masters of the Comédie-Française. Though she was still in high school, she had been doing some modelling and had already landed a bit part in Godard's film "Détective" earlier that year. Polanski's name meant nothing to her: she'd been just a baby at the time of Tate's murder, and only eleven at the time of the rape case. Before going to meet him, however, she boned up on his history—so thoroughly, she says, that she was "scared shitless" going up to his apartment, and didn't touch the drinks or the cakes he proffered. Polanski was immediately taken with her. For one thing, she was extraordinarily beautiful, even exotic—somewhat outside his usual Basia-Tate-Kinski mold, with eyes of a startling translucent green. Almost from the outset, and in an extremely uncharacteristic manner, he took to telling his friends, "Listen, I'm madly in love."



Polanski's audiences were able to follow the course of that love—between the frames, as it were, of his next two films, the first of which, "Frantic," was an almost straightforward suspense thriller. Given that he and his collaborator Gérard Brach had decided to venture into Hitchcock territory, the specific plot line for "Frantic" was, again, strikingly evocative of issues in Polanski's life, both past (man and wife arrive at Paris hotel after a long night's flight; man pops into shower and, emerging, finds his wife has disappeared) and future: Harrison Ford, playing the husband desperately searching for his wife, soon falls in with a leather-clad chippie—played, of course, by Emmanuelle. The narrative evolves, in part, into an exploration of issues surrounding marriage and fidelity, because the husband, while manfully endeavoring to rescue his bourgeois wife, finds himself being ineluctably drawn to the girl. At the climax, his dilemma is neatly solved for him when the girl lies dying in his newly rescued wife's arms. A year after the film's completion, Polanski resolved his own version of the dilemma by marrying Emmanuelle.

With Polanski's next (and most recent) film, "Bitter Moon," once again featuring Emmanuelle, audiences were given further, if somewhat oblique, access to his evolving views on relationships in general and his own in particular. Far from being the exaggerated descent into libidinal excess for which some critics and audiences mistook it, "Bitter Moon," the story of an uptight British couple's shipboard encounter with an unnervingly dissolute bohemian pair, in fact played more like a libertine's final swearing off of libertinage. While "normal love" might be "incredibly boring," as Polanski had once assured an interviewer, he had found a roundabout way of celebrating its virtues through the immolation of its opposite. By the end, he seemed to be saying that erotic relationships that fail to progress to marriage and childbearing are condemned to degeneration. And, indeed, almost as soon as he and Emmanuelle completed the film, she announced that she was pregnant.

WHEN I set out to visit Polanski in Paris, I was half expecting to encounter a man racked or anguished or ruined by the calamitous vicissitudes of such a life. Instead, the man I met seemed happy and centered and sane. And surely this had a good deal to do with Emmanuelle. They have been together now for ten years, and they still seem delighted with each other.

Nor was it only in his personal life that Polanski seemed to be getting things together. "He has definitely changed," I was told by his producer Thom Mount, who has been collaborating with him regularly for more than a decade now. "I think when he first started he was in love with film, then for a long time he was in love with the life style that film afforded him, and now it's as if he were coming back to his first love all over again. I kid him—I tell him it's about time, because he may only have another twenty good years in him."

Polanski has mellowed noticeably in his attitude toward actors and their role in the creative process. From his earliest days, he was a notorious control freak, and through much of the first half of his career, at least, he barely concealed his contempt for the majority of actors as such, likening them variously to clowns, chess pieces, mere props, and "monkeys." (He was delighted when his crew plied the ones on the "Macbeth" set with fresh bananas one morning.) As a seasoned actor in his own right, he would probably have preferred to act out all the roles in his movies in addition to directing them. Short of that, he usually tried to impose on actors his own conception of the performance rather than allow them to develop interpretations of their own. His propensity for giving highly specific line readings was notorious. (People in Hollywood used to joke about how Jack Nicholson had had to hold himself back from delivering his "Chinatown" lines with a Polish accent. When he was asked why he put up with Polanski's overdirecting, Nicholson replied, "Because he's a genius. The little bastard's a genius.") And it was toward many of his female stars—especially those from whom he needed to evoke an aura of fragile vulnerability—that Polanski could be the most brutal. Yet the performances he extracted from those actresses have consistently been among their most terrifyingly memorable; the question remains whether this was so partly because during much of the shoot they were in fact terrified.

These days, though, Polanski's appreciation of the interaction between actor and director seems far more nuanced. "It's like a dissolve, the original vision meeting material reality," he remarked to me one afternoon during a break in the shooting. "And I'm like a conductor working with a superb orchestra. It's faster, more telegraphic, for me to give a line reading—to hum, as it were, the interpretation I'm trying to achieve—than to spell out the emotional complexities underlying that interpretation. A noncomplexed actor will understand that, and I, for my part, am looking to be surprised by the actor." (This more densely textured sense of working with actors may also derive in part from his own recent work as an actor, in a new film by another strong director, Giuseppe Tornatore, whose earlier work includes "Cinema Paradiso." In this film, "A Pure Formality," which is tentatively scheduled to open in New York this spring, Polanski has been marvellously cast, opposite Gérard Depardieu and against type, as a scrupulous magistrate investigating an apparent murder.)

A few weeks after the "Death and the Maiden" shoot was completed, I telephoned the three actors for their thoughts on what working with Polanski had been like. "I'm glad it wasn't my first film," Sigourney Weaver told me. "He was tough, and he wasn't there to make us feel better. 'Grow up, get real, be an adult'—that was the continual subtext. On the other hand, by the end I think all of us felt this tremendous loyalty." Had being the only woman been difficult? "No, it was difficult being the *tallest*," she said, laughing. "But, seriously, I think he may be the best actor's director I've ever worked with. The first day of rehearsals, he sat us down and read us the entire script, taking all the parts. Stuart looked on, horrified. But I tend to agree with Ben, who said that he prefers it when a director gives him a narrow target—he finds it liberating. And, of course, it depends on who's giving the line readings. Most directors won't even try—they're unwilling to put themselves on the spot like that. But Roman does you the high honor of directing, of thinking it through, right in front of your eyes."

Ben Kingsley spoke of Polanski's "actor's love of and delight in acting," and said he felt that Polanski had lavished just the right amount of attention on his players—"neither clamping down too hard nor leaving so much leeway you didn't know where you were." As for the line readings, he echoed Polanski's own metaphor, saying, "A brilliant first violinist would be a fool to ignore a brilliant conductor, and anyway it's symbiotic—his reading is coming in response to my own." Kingsley kept returning to "the extraordinary level of trust" that Polanski inspired on the set; it "allowed Sigourney and me to get closer and closer so that we could in turn become more and more violent with each other during our scenes," he said. "And that's not a paradox. That's what acting is: the more trust, the deeper you can venture into the abyss. A lesser director would have freaked out, seeing us happily conversing off in a corner between takes, but a great director understands such a dynamic, and even nurtures it."

Stuart Wilson had the hardest time: he resisted Polanski's directorial style from the start. At one point early in the filming, Polanski even tried to show him how to *shrug*, and Wilson exploded. Polanski undercut this outburst by launching into a long joke about a horse that repeatedly winks at a particular bettor at the racetrack. The guy can't believe his eyes, but finally he goes and puts all his money on the horse, the race is run, and the horse comes in dead last. On its way back to the stable, the horse looks up at the bettor and shrugs. "Couldn't you shrug like *that*?" Polanski asked. Working with Polanski, Wilson told me, had been both terrifying and strange. "Roman's a curious mixture," he said. "He can make you feel more insecure than you ever have felt in your entire life—but then safer, too." He still seemed confused by the experience. I asked if he would ever consider working with Polanski again. "If the right project came along, I'd grit my teeth and be there in a flash," he said.

I asked each of the actors whether, given the autobiographical implications of the material, Polanski had ever referred to his own experiences. For example, in conversation with Weaver had he ever referred to the rape accusation against himself? "Absolutely not," she replied. "Things were very pure on the set." With Kingsley? "No," he said. "Roman has immense resources of wisdom, experience, depth, but he doesn't talk about any of that stuff—he *uses* it." And had he spoken much with Wilson about the Tate murder, particularly during those scenes where his character wonders aloud how he would have behaved if he had been subjected to similar horrors, and where he speaks of his guilt feelings about that and about his subsequent infidelities? "No, no," Wilson replied. "That never came up. Listen, Roman's a deep, deep pool who likes to make like he's a shallow pool."

A FEW months later, I happened to be in Paris again and was able a few more times to visit Polanski, who by then was hard at work on the film's post-production. On my last day, I dropped by his apartment, overlooking the elegant Avenue Montaigne, off the Champs-Élysées, to join him for a drive out to the editing facility. He had an interesting day ahead of him, for he would be choosing from among five takes of a scene by Ben Kingsley: the film's climactic soliloquy, in which, by the edge of a cliff in the early-morning light, the doctor finally does—or doesn't—authentically confess to the depredations that the wife has been accusing him of. The takes had been shot a few months earlier, on location in Spain, near the very end of the ten-week shoot—the one time the cast and crew had left their dark soundstage outside Paris. The filming had been done at twilight, and the crew had had only forty minutes of light to work with. Kingsley delivered five separate versions of the three-minute soliloquy, one after the

IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK A LOT LIKE CHRISTMAS
MANKOFF

other, each of them perfect, yet each different—shaded in subtle ways to entirely transform the moral connotations of what he was saying, and, for that matter, of everything that had gone before. It was an astonishing performance. Unfortunately, Polanski wasn't going to be able to use them all, and even at this late stage, he hadn't quite made up his mind.

Watching those takes and then a rough cut of the dénouement, I thought about how Polanski's films have changed in the last several years. Through most of his early work, his films tended to taper relentlessly to a dark joke at the dead end: at the end of "Knife in the Water," for instance, the husband is damned if he does and damned if he doesn't; "Cul-de-Sac" ends with the cuckold abandoned on a narrow rocky outcropping with the tide rising around him; in "Chinatown"—well, forget it, Jake, that's Chinatown. Polanski's most recent films have been similarly structured, except that in each of them there has been, at the last moment, the glimmer of an out: the possibility of children, say, in "Bitter Moon," and, to even more impressive effect, the suggestion in "Death and the Maiden," after all the pain and torment, of a kind of forgiveness.

That morning at his apartment, I had asked Polanski about his own sense of the future. Did he think he would ever get back to Hollywood? Did he care? Was he doing anything about it?

"Of course I'd like to be able to return," he said. "Not to live—I don't think I could live there again, because the city, those streets, have too many bad associations—but just to be able to work in a normal fashion." It is surely the case that his career has been marginalized by his not being able to be there and to compete for such A-list projects as "Silence of the Lambs." "It's been seventeen years now," he continued. "And I miss the logic and the efficiencies of the Hollywood system. But, no, nothing in particular is on the horizon, and actually I even surprise myself by how I keep seeming to procrastinate on pursuing the matter."

During our conversation, another possibility for the future seemed to be on Polanski's mind. He said that one of the things he would most like to do was make a film in Poland—one set during the war. (Among other things, he has been looking at his old radio-mate Begley's "Wartime Lies.") This was startling, given his adamant refusal in the past to deal directly with such material, and his hellbent flight from it earlier in his career. Perhaps Spielberg's "Schindler's List" opened some floodgates for him, or perhaps "Death and the Maiden" itself had. Or—what was more likely, and was something he himself surmised—simply being with his daughter, Morgane, who is now twenty-two months old, has been taking him back to first things.

Morgane was out in the hallway as we talked, cavorting with her nanny, and Polanski smiled at the racket. He is obviously besotted with her. Whenever she toddles into his office, everything comes to a stop as he melts and becomes her plaything. The same on the set: One day, visiting, she started to play with his eyepiece.

"Ah," Sigourney Weaver said. "Another director."

"No," Polanski answered immediately. "She will be in front of the camera!" He and Emmanuelle have had their huge living-room TV screen wired so that they can push a remote-control button and summon up a view of Morgane asleep in her crib.

We listened to her for a while, and then Polanski gave a long sigh. "But thank God for all those turns in my life, even the bad ones—maybe even especially the bad ones," he said. "Had I missed a single one, I wouldn't have ended up here, with Emmanuelle and Morgane, and to me that is completely unthinkable."

It was getting late, and we had to rush over to the editing studio. We tried to sneak out unnoticed, but Morgane, glimpsing the briefcase in the hallway and realizing that we were leaving, let out an anguished cry—"*Papa! Papa!*"—and came rushing to intercept us. The nanny grabbed her and held her as we sheepishly boarded the elevator. The child, her arms thrust out, kept pleading frantically, "*Papa! Papa!*" Roman threw her a kiss, and the elevator door closed, but we could hear her wails all the way down, and Roman was nearly undone. "Of course she's desolated," he said, finally. "She doesn't understand. For her, it's as if I were disappearing forever." ♦

Roman Polanski, Emmanuelle Seigner, and their daughter, Morgane.

FICTION

THE GIRL WHO LEFT HER SOCK ON THE FLOOR

BY DEBORAH EISENBERG

JESSICA dangled a sock between her thumb and forefinger, studied it, and let it drop. "There are times," she said, "one wearies of rooming with a pig."

Pig. Francie checked to see what page she was on and slammed "World History" shut. "Why not go over to the nice, clean library?" she said. "You could go to the nice, clean library, and you could think nice, clean thoughts. I'll just root around here in the homework." She pulled her blanket up and turned to the window, her eyes stinging.

Faint, constant crumblings and tricklings . . . Outside, spring was sneaking up under the cradle of snow in the valley, behind the lacy gray air that veiled everything except the girl, identifiable as hardly more than the red dot of her jacket, who was winding up the hill toward the dorm.

Jessica sighed noisily and dumped a stack of clothing into a drawer. "I will get to that stuff, please, Jessica," Francie said, "if you'll just kindly leave it."

Jessica gazed sorrowfully at Francie's ear, then bent down to retrieve a dust-festooned sweatshirt from beneath Francie's bed.

"You know," Francie said, "there are people in the world—not many, but a few—to whom the most important thing is not whether there happens to be a sock on the floor. There are people in the world who are not afraid to face reality, to face the fact that the floor is the natural place for a sock, that the floor is where a sock just naturally goes when it's off. But do we fearless few have a voice? No. No, these are words which must never be spoken—true, Jessica? This is a thought which must never be thought."

It was Cynthia in the red jacket, the secretary, Francie saw now—not one of the students. Cynthia wasn't much older than the seniors, but she lived in town and never came to meals. "Right, Jessica?" Francie said.

There was some little oddness about seeing Cynthia outside the office—as if something were leaking somewhere.

"Jessica?" Francie said. "Oh, well. '*But the poor, saintly girl had gone deaf as a post. The end.*' "

Jessica's voice sliced between Francie and the window. "Look, Francie, I don't want to trivialize your pain or anything, but I'm getting kind of bored over here. Besides which, I am not your personal maid."

"Oink oink," Francie said. "Grunt, grunt. '*Actually, not the end, really, at all, because God performed a miracle, and the beautiful deaf girl could hear again, though everything from that moment on sounded to her as the gruntings of pigs.*' "

"*As* the gruntings of pigs?" Jessica demanded. "Sounded *as* gruntings?"

"Oink oink," Francie said. She opened "World History" to page 463 again. "An Artist's Conception of the Storming of the Bastille." Well, and who were "Editors Clarke & Melton," for that matter, to be in charge of what was going on? To decide which, out of all the things that went on, were *things that had happened*? Yeah, "World History: The Journey of Two Editors and Their Jobs." Why not a picture of people trapped in their snooty boarding school with their snooty roommates? "Anyhow, guess what, next year we both get to pick new roommates."

"If we're both still here," Jessica said. "Besides, that's then—"

"What does *that* mean?" Francie said.

"You don't have to shout at me all the time," Jessica said. "Besides, as I was saying, that's then and this is now. And if I were you, I'd stop calling Mr. Klemper 'Sex Machine.' Sooner or later someone's going to—"

But just then the door opened, and the girl, Cynthia, was standing there in her red jacket. "Frances McIntyre?" Cynthia said. She stared at Francie and Jessica as though she had forgotten which one Francie was. And Francie and Jessica stared back as though they had forgotten, too. "Frances McIntyre, Mrs. Peck wants to see you in the Administration Building."

Jessica watched, flushed and round-eyed, as Francie put on her motorcycle jacket and work boots. "You're going to freeze like that, Francie," Jessica said, and then Cynthia held the door open.

"Francie—" Jessica said. "Francie, do you want me to go with you?"

Francie had paused on the threshold. She didn't turn around, and she couldn't speak. She shook her head.

What had she done? What had been seen or heard or said? Had someone already told Mr. Klemper? Was it cutting lacrosse? Had she been reported smoking again in back of the Science Building? Because if she had she was out. Out. Out. End. The end of her fancy scholarship, the end of her education, the end of her freedom, the end of her future. No, the beginning of a new future, her real future, the one that had been lying in wait for her all along, whose snuffly breathing she could hear in the dark. She'd live out her days as a checkout girl, choking on the toxic vapors of household cleaners and rotting baked goods, trudging home in the cold to rot, herself, in the scornful silence of her bulky, furious mother. Her mother, who had slaved to give ungrateful Francie this squandered opportunity. Her mother, who wouldn't tolerate a sock on the floor for as long as one instant.

Mrs. Peck's bleached blue eyes stared at Francie as Francie stood in front of her, shivering, each second becoming more vividly aware that her jacket, her little, filmy dress, her boots, her new nose ring all trod on the boundaries of the dress code. "Do sit down, please, Frances," Mrs. Peck said.

FILIP PAGOWSKI

Mrs. Peck was wearing, of course, a well-made and proudly unflattering suit. On the walls around her were decorative, framed what-were-they-called, Francie thought—Wise Sayings. "I have something very, very sad, I'm afraid, to tell you, Frances," Mrs. Peck began.

Out, she was *out*. Francie's blood howled like a storm at sea; her heart pitched and tossed.

But Mrs. Peck's voice—what Mrs. Peck's voice seemed to be saying, was that Francie's mother was dead.

"What?" Francie said. The howling stopped abruptly, as though a door had been shut. "My mother's in the hospital. My mother broke her hip."

Mrs. Peck bowed her head slightly, over her folded hands. "EVERYTHING MUST BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY, NOTHING TRAGICALLY," the wall announced over her shoulder. "FORTUNE AND HUMOR GOVERN THE WORLD."

"My mother has a broken hip," Francie insisted. "Nobody dies from a broken fucking *hip*."

Mrs. Peck's eyes closed for a moment. "There was an embolism," she said. "Apparently, this is not unheard of. Patients who greatly exceed an ideal weight . . . That is, a Miss Healy called from the hospital. Do you remember Miss Healy? A student nurse, I believe. I understand you met each other when you went to visit your mother several weeks ago. Your mother must have tried to get up sometime during the night. And most probably—" Mrs. Peck frowned at a piece of paper and put on her glasses. "Yes. Most probably, according to Miss Healy, your mother wished to go to the toilet. Evidently, she would have fallen back against her pillow. The staff wouldn't have discovered her death until morning."

Bits of things were falling around Francie. " 'Wouldn't have'?" she plucked from the air.

"This is, of course, a reconstruction," Mrs. Peck said. "Miss Healy came on duty this afternoon. Your mother wasn't there, and Miss Healy became concerned that perhaps no one had thought to notify you. A thoughtful young woman. I had the impression she was acting outside official channels, but . . ."

"But *all's well that ends well*," Francie said.

Mrs. Peck's eyes rested distantly on Francie. "I wonder," she said. "It might be possible, under the terms of your scholarship, to arrange for some therapy when you return." Her gaze wandered up the chattering wall. "A hospital must be a terribly difficult thing to administer," she remarked to it graciously. "I have absolutely no one to bring you to Albany, Frances, I'm afraid. I'll have to call someone in your family to come for you."

Francie gasped. "You can't!" she said.

Mrs. Peck frowned. She appeared to be embarrassed. "Ah," she said, no doubt picturing, Francie thought, some abyss of mortifying circumstances. "In that case . . ." she said. "Yes. I'll have Mr. Klemper cancel French tomorrow, and he—"

"Why can't I take the morning bus?" Francie said. "I've taken that bus a thousand times." She was going red, she knew; one more second and she'd cry. "Don't cancel French," she said. "I always take that bus. *Please*."

Mrs. Peck's glance strayed up the wall again, and hesitated. "HONI SOIT QUI MAL Y PENSE," Francie read.

Mrs. Peck took off her glasses and rubbed the bridge of her nose. "Miss Healy," she mused. "Such an unsuitable name for a nurse, isn't it. People must often make foolish remarks."

How could it be true? How could Francie be on the bus now, when she should be at school? The sky hadn't changed since yesterday, the trees and fields out the window hadn't changed; Francie could imagine her mother just as clearly as she'd ever been able to, so how could it be true?

And yet her mother would have been dead while she herself had been asleep, dreaming. Of what? Of what? Of Mr. Davis, probably. Not of her mother, not dreaming of a little wad of blood coalescing like a pearl in her mother's body, preparing to wedge itself into her mother's heart.

If you were to break, for example, your hip, there would be the pain, the proof, telling you all the time it was true: *that's then and this is now*. But this thing—each second it had to be true all over again; she was getting hurled against each second. *Now*. And *now again—thwack!* Maybe one of these seconds she'd smash right through and find herself in the clear place where her mother was alive, scowling, criticizing. . . .

Out the window, snow was draining away from the patched fields of the small farms, the small, failing farms. Rusted machinery glowed against the sky in fragile tangles. Her mother would have been dead while Francie got up and took her shower and worried about being late to breakfast and was late to breakfast and went to biology and then to German and then dozed through English and then ate lunch and then hid in the dorm instead of playing lacrosse and then quarrelled with Jessica about a sock. At some moment in the night her mother had gone from being completely alive to being completely dead.

The passengers were scraggy and exhausted-looking, like a committee assigned to the bus aeons earlier to puzzle out just this sort of thing—part of a rotating team whose members were picked up and dropped off at stations looping the planet. How different they were from the team of sleek girls at school, who already knew everything they needed to know. Which team was Francie on? Ha-ha. She glanced at the man across the aisle, who nodded commiseratingly between bites of the vile-smelling food he lifted from a plastic-foam container on his lap.

All those hours during which her life (along with her mother) had gone from being one thing to being another, it had held its shape, like a car window Francie once saw hit by a rock. The rock hit, a web of tiny, glittering lines fanned out, and a minute or so later the window tinkled to the street in splinters.

The dazzling, razor-edged splinters had tinkled around Francie yesterday afternoon in Mrs. Peck's voice. "Your family." "Have someone in your family come for you." Well, fine, but where on earth had Mrs. Peck got the idea there *was* anyone in Francie's family?

From Francie's mother, doubtless, the world's leading expert in giving people ideas without having to say a single word. "A proud woman" was an observation people tended to make, vague and flustered after encountering her. But what did that mean, "proud"? Proud of her poverty. Proud of her poor education. Proud of her unfashionable size. Proud of bringing up her Difficult Daughter, Without an Iota of Help. So what was the difference, when you got right down to it, between pride and shame?

Francie had a memory, one of her few from early childhood, that never altered or dimmed, however often it sprang out: herself in the building stairwell with Mrs. Dougherty, making Mrs. Dougherty laugh. She could still feel her feet fly up as her mother grabbed her and pulled her inside, still hear the door slam. She could still see (and yet this was something she could never have seen, really) skinny Mrs. Dougherty cackling alone in the hall. "*How could you embarrass me like that?*" her mother said. The wave of shock and outrage and humiliation engulfed Francie again with each remembering; she felt her mother's fierce grip on her arm. Francie was an embarrassment. What on earth could she have been doing in the hall? *An embarrassment.* Well, *so be it.*

On the day she had brought Francie all the way from Albany to be interviewed at school, Francie's mother—wearing gloves!—had a private conversation with Mrs. Peck. Francie sat in the outer office and waited. Cynthia had been typing demurely, and occasionally other girls would come through—perfect girls, beautiful and beautifully behaved and sly. Francie could just picture their mothers. When she eventually did see some—Jessica's tall, chestnut-haired mother among them—it turned out that her imagination had not exaggerated.

Waiting in the outer office, Francie feared (Francie hoped) she was to be turned ignominiously away. Instead, she was later confronted by Mrs. Peck's withering smile of welcome; Mrs. Peck was gluttonous for Francie's test scores. That Francie and her mother looked, each in her own way, so entirely *unsuitable* appeared to increase, rather than diminish, their desirability.

When her mother and Mrs. Peck emerged from the office together that afternoon, a blaze of triumph and contempt crackled behind the veneer of patently suspect humility on her mother's face. Mrs. Peck, on the other hand, looked as if she'd been bonked on the head with a plank.

Surely it was during that conference that Francie's family had been born. Her mother's gift (the automatic nuancing of the unspoken) and Mrs. Peck's mandate (to heap distinction upon herself) had intertwined to generate little tendrils of plausible realities. Which were now generating tendrils of their own: an imaginary church with imaginary relatives—*suitable* relatives—wavering behind viscous organ music and bearing with simple dignity their imaginary grief. Oh, her poor mother! Her poor mother! What possible business was it of Mrs. Peck's *when* her mother had wanted to go to the toilet for the last time?

Several companionable tears made their way down Francie's face, turning from hot to cold. The sensation consoled her as long as it lasted. When she opened her eyes, she saw the frayed outskirts of town.

FRANCIE climbed the stairs cautiously, lest creakings draw the still gregarious Mrs. Dougherty to her peephole. She paused with her key in the lock before contaminating irreversibly the silence, her mother's special silence, which, she thought, a person had to shout to be heard over. Francie leaned her head against the door's cool plane, listening, then turned the key. The lock's tumbling sounded like a gunshot.

A little colorless sunlight had forced its way around the neighboring buildings and lay, exhausted, across the floor. A fine coating of city grime sealed the sills in front of the closed windows like insulation. Her mother's bed was tightly made; the bedspread was as mute as the surface of a lake into which a clue had been dropped long before.

The only disorder in the kitchen was a cup Francie had left in the sink when she'd come to see her mother in the hospital three weeks earlier, still full of dark liquid in which velvety spots had begun to blossom. Francie sat down at the table. The night she'd finally dared to ask her mother what had happened to her father they'd been in here, just finishing the dishes. Francie remembered: her mother was holding a white dish towel; she started to speak.

Too late, then, for Francie to retract the question—a question that had been clogging her mouth ever since the day, years before, when Corkie Patterson had pummelled into her the concept that every single person on earth had a father. As Francie clutched the wet counter her mother spoke of the sound—the terrible tangled sound of brakes and the impact—the crowds out the window, which at first hid everything, the siren circling down on their block like a hawk. She did not use the word "blood," but when she finished her story and left the room without so much as a glance for Francie, Francie lifted her dripping fingers and stared at them.

After that, Francie's mother was even more unyielding, as though she were ashamed of her husband's death, or ashamed to have spoken of it. And Francie's father evaporated without a trace. Francie had only cryptic fragments from before that night in the kitchen with which to assemble the story: her parents married at eighteen,

GATES ON LEONARDO

Taking advantage of an invention that Leonardo da Vinci did not predict, we asked Bill Gates, via E-mail, about the Codex Hammer, a Leonardo manuscript that Gates recently bought at auction for $30.8 million. Here are some of his comments.

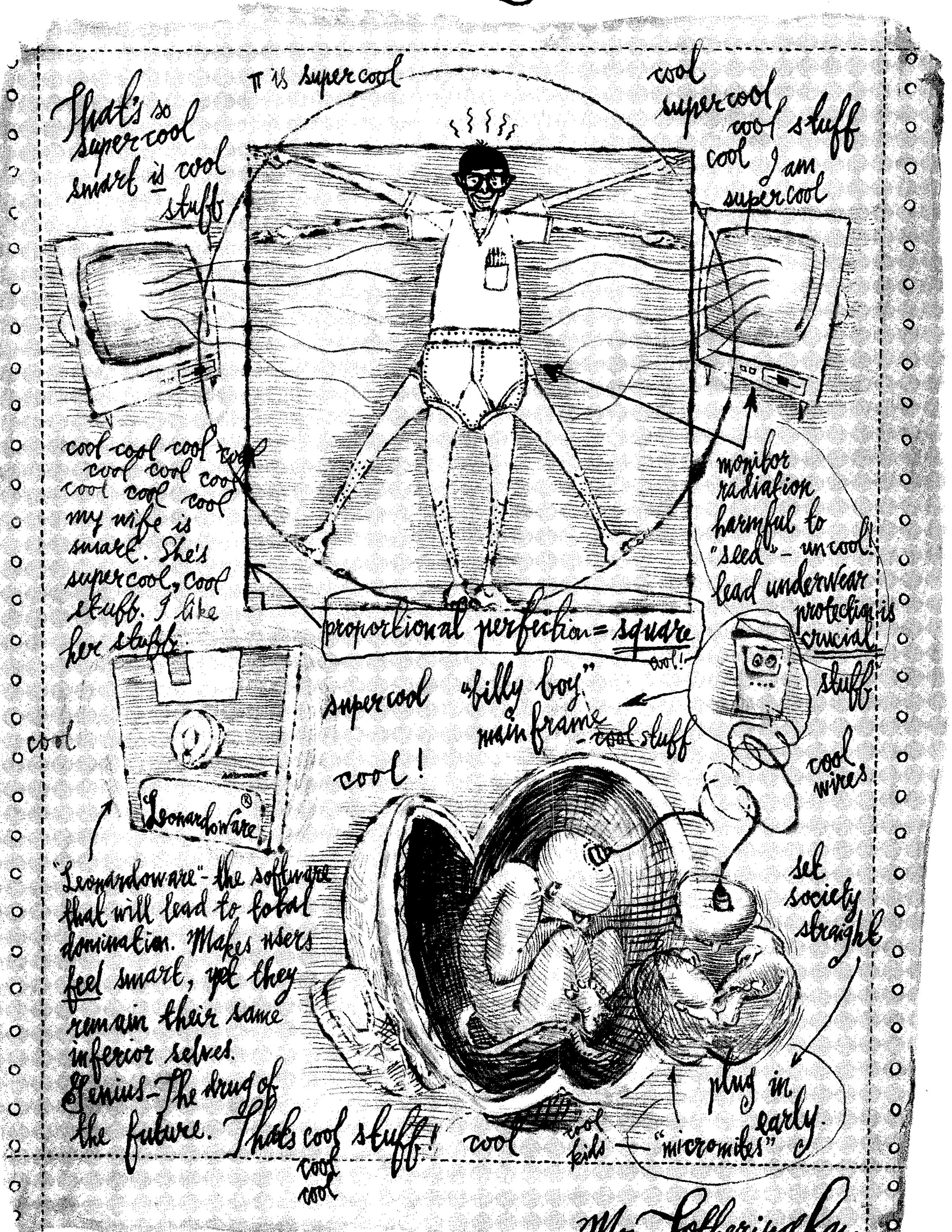
Relative to da Vinci:

Da Vinci is someone I have admired since I first read about him, when I was ten. He talks about major things to come, like submarines or optics or erosion or how old the earth must be, in a clear terse fashion. He had a hard time focussing on getting one project done because he was thinking about so many things.

There is certainly no modern equivalent to da Vinci. Scientists today include some true geniuses, but they will not go off and write down the agenda for the next century in their private notebooks. How many scientists today paint like da Vinci or do sculpture? This is despite the increase in population and much better tools and information about these arts than ever before.

I am very excited to own this notebook and have a chance to lend it out around the world. For periods of time, I will have it in the library in the house I am building.

Codex Gates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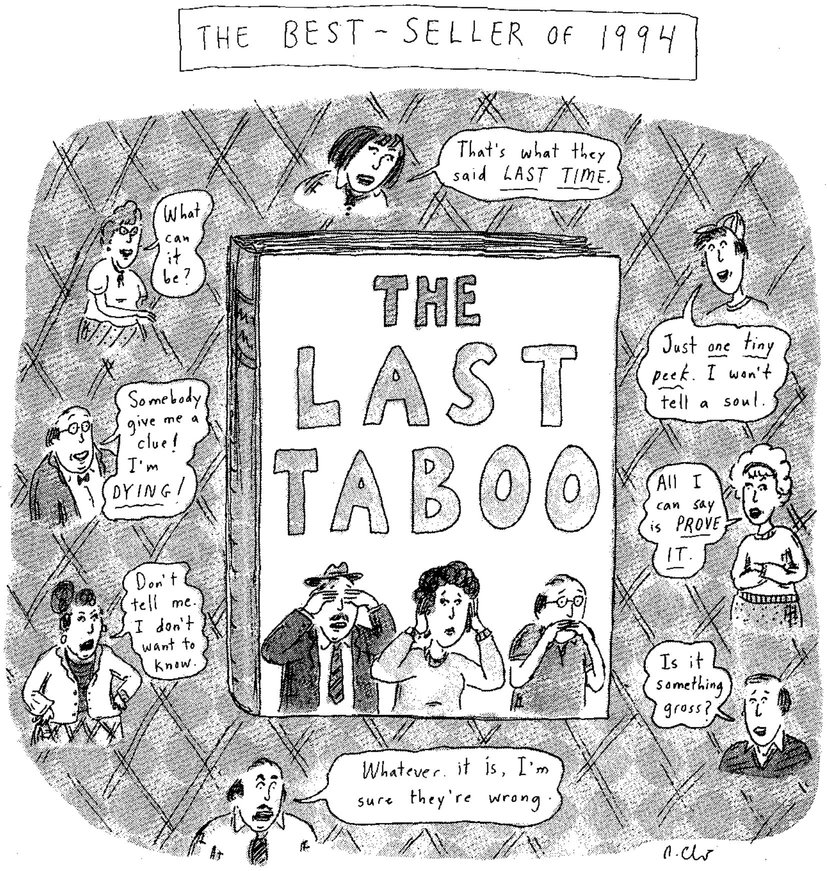
THE BEST-SELLER OF 1994
THE LAST TABOO
That's what they said LAST TIME.
What can it be?
Just one tiny peek. I won't tell a soul.
Somebody give me a clue! I'm DYING!
All I can say is PROVE IT.
Don't tell me. I don't want to know.
Is it something gross?
Whatever it is, I'm sure they're wrong.

she'd figured out. Had they loved each other? The undiminishing vigor of her mother's resentment toward absolutely everything was warming, in its way—there must have been love to produce all that hatred.

The bathroom, too, was clean—spotless, actually, except for a tiny smudge on the mirror. A fingerprint. Hers? Her mother's? She peered past it, into her own face. Had he even known there was to be a baby? Just think—things that you did went on and on, turning into situations, for example. Into people . . .

As little as Francie knew about him, it would be infinitely more than he could have known about her. There were no pictures, but if she were to subtract her mother's eyes . . . In just a few years, she would see changes in her face that her father had not lived to see in his.

"In a few years!" Bad enough she had to deal with "in a few minutes." *When you return*, Mrs. Peck had said. Well, sure, a person couldn't just stay at school, probably, when her mother died. But what on earth was she supposed to do here?

Her mother would have told her. Francie snatched open a drawer and out flew the fact of her mother's slippery, pinkish heap of underwear. Her mother's toothbrush sat next to the mirror in a glass. In the mirror, past the fingerprint, her mother's eyes lay across her own reflection like a mask.

THE hospital floated in the middle of a vast ocean of construction, or maybe it was demolition; a nation in itself, of which all humans were, at every moment, potential citizens. The inevitable false move, and it was wham, onto the gurney, with workers grabbing smocks and gloves to plunge into the cavity of you, and then lights that burned all night. Outside this building you lived as though nothing were happening to you that you didn't know about. But here, there was simply no pretending.

Cynthia had come up the hill, Mrs. Peck had sent Francie home, and now here she was—completely lost; she'd come in the wrong entrance. People passed, in small groups, not touching or speaking. The proliferating corridors and rotundas bloomed with soft noises—chiming, and disembodied announcements, and the muted tapping of canes and rubber shoes and walkers. The ceilings and floors were the same color and had the same brightness; metal winked, signalling between wheelchairs and bedrails. Francie tried to suppress the notion, which had popped up from somewhere like a groundhog, that her mother was still alive, lost here somewhere herself.

Two unfamiliar nurses sat at a desk at the mouth of the wing where Section E, Room 332, was. In their crisp little white hats they appeared to be exempt from error. They looked up as Francie approached, and their faces were blank and tired, as if they knew Francie through and through—as if they knew everything there was to know about this girl in the short, filmy dress and motorcycle jacket and electric-green socks, who was coming toward them with so much difficulty, as if the air were filled with invisible restraints.

But, as it turned out, when Francie tried to explain herself, using (presumably) key, she thought, words, like "Kathryn McIntyre," and "Room 332," and "dead," even then neither of the nurses seemed to understand. "Did you want to speak to a doctor?" one of them said.

A tiny, hot beading of sweat sprang out all over Francie. From the moment she was born people had been happy to tell her what to do, down to the most minute detail; Eds. Clarke & Melton knew just what was happening; there were admonitions and exhortations plastered all over the walls—this is how to behave, this is what to think, this is how to think it, that's then, this is now, this is where to put your sock—but no one had ever said one little thing that would get her through any five given minutes of her life!

She stared at the nurse who had spoken: *Say it*, Francie willed her, but the nurse instead turned her attention to a form attached to a clipboard. "Is Miss Healy around?" Francie asked after a minute.

The fact was, Francie would not have recognized Miss Healy; she'd hardly noticed the broad-faced, slightly clumsy-looking girl who'd been changing the water in a vase of flowers as Francie had listened to her mother describe, with sombre gloating, the damage to her body, the shock of finding herself on the ice with her pork chop

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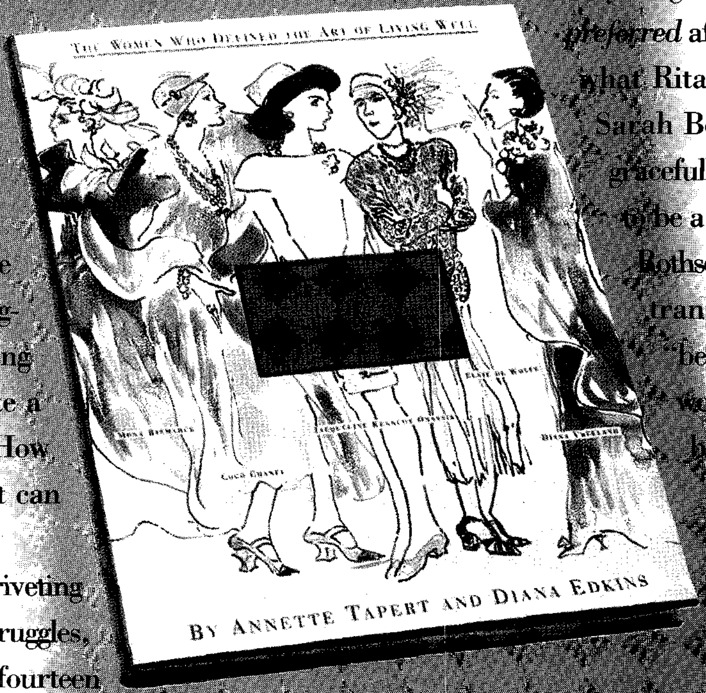

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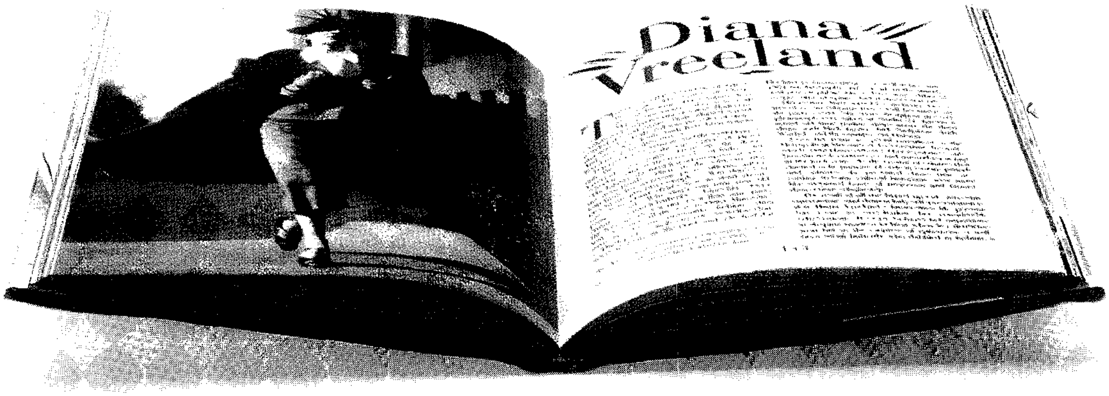

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and canned peaches and so forth strewn around her, the pitiable little trickle of milk she had watched flow from the ruined carton into the filthy slush before she understood that she couldn't move.

"She never complained," Miss Healy was saying, in a melancholy, slightly adenoidal voice. "She was such a pleasant person. You could tell the terrible pain she was in, but she never said a word." Miss Healy directed her mournful recital toward Francie's elbow, as if she were in danger of being derailed by Francie's face. "And when the people from her office brought candy and flowers? She was just so *polite*. Even though you could see those things were not what she wanted."

Oh, great. Who but her mother could get someone to say that her pain was obvious but that she never complained? Who but her mother could get someone to say she was polite even though everyone could tell she didn't want their gifts? No doubt about it, the body they'd carted off almost a day and a half ago from Room 332 had been her mother's—Miss Healy had just laid waste, in her squelchy voice, to *that* last wisp of hope.

"The thing is," Francie said, "what am I supposed to do?"

"To do?" Miss Healy said. Her look of suffering was momentarily whisked away. "I mean, unfortunately, your mother's dead."

"No, I know," Francie said. "I get that part. I just don't know what to *do*."

Miss Healy looked at her. Clearly Francie was turning out to be, unlike her mother, *not a pleasant person*. "Well, you'll want to grieve, of course," Miss Healy said, as if she were remembering a point from a legal document. "Everyone needs closure." She frowned, then unexpectedly addressed, after all, Francie's problem. "I'll call downstairs so you can see her."

Fading smells of bodies clung to the air like plaintive ghosts, their last friendly overtures vanquished by the stronger smells of disinfectants. An indecipherable muttering came from other ghosts, sequestered in a TV suspended from the ceiling. Outside the window huge, predatory machines prowled among mounds of trash.

Miss Healy returned. "Mrs. McIntyre isn't downstairs. I'm really sorry—I guess they've sent her on."

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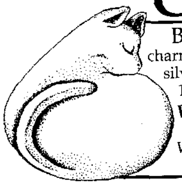

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They? On? If only there were someone around to take over. Anyone. Jessica, even. At least Jessica would be able to ask some sensible question. "On . . ." Francie began uncertainly, and Jessica gave her a little shove. "On where?"

"Oh," Miss Healy said. "Well, I mean, does your family use any in particular?"

Francie stared: Where would Jessica even begin with that one?

"Does your family have a particular one they like," Miss Healy explained. "Mortuary."

"It's just me and mother," Francie said.

Miss Healy nodded, as if this confirmed her point. "Uh-huh. So they'd have sent her on to whatever place was specified by the next of kin."

Francie felt Jessica start to giggle. "It's just me and mother," Francie said again.

"Just whoever your mother put down on the AN37-53," Miss Healy said. "Not literally the next of kin necessarily—she couldn't have used you, for instance, because you're a minor. But just, if there's no spouse, people might put down someone at their office, say. Or she might have used that nice friend of hers who came to visit once, Mrs. Dougherty."

Yargh. It wasn't enough that her mother had died—no, they had to toss her out, into that huge, melted mob, *the dead*, who couldn't speak for themselves, who were too indistinguishable to be remembered, who could be used to prove anything, who could be represented any way at all! "My mother *hates* everyone at her office," Francie said. "My mother *hates* Mrs. Dougherty. Mother calls Mrs. Dougherty that buggy Irish slut."

Miss Healy drew back. "Well, I guess your mom wasn't expecting to *die*, exactly, when she filled out that form," she said, and then recovered herself. "There, now. I'll call down again. Even *this* crazy morgue has files, I guess."

Out the window a wrecking ball swung toward a solitary wall. Miss Healy hesitated. She seemed to be waiting for something. "I called that lady at the school," she said. She stood looking at Francie, and Francie realized that she and Miss Healy must be al-

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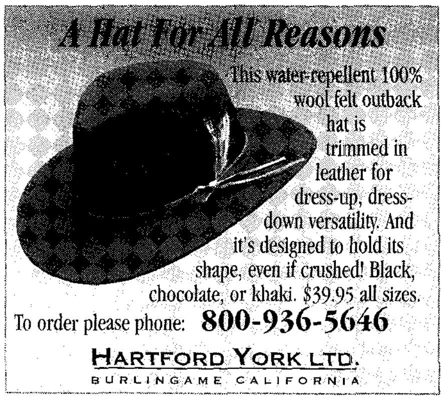
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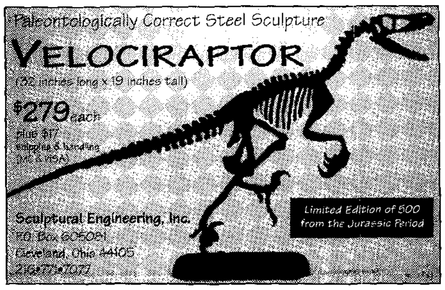
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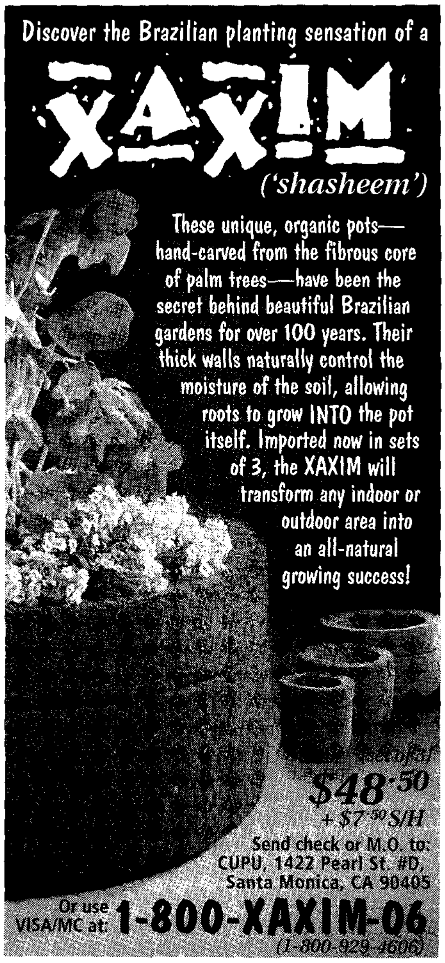
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most the same age. "I just didn't figure there'd be some other way you'd know."

"How did mother get all the way out here?" Francie asked the man who greeted her.

The man's little smile intensified the ruefulness of his expression. "We get a lot of folks out this way," he said. "You might be surprised."

"That's what I meant," Francie said. "I meant I was surprised."

The man jumped slightly, as if Francie had gummed him on the ankle, and then smiled ruefully again. "Serving all faiths," he explained, gesturing at a sign on the wall. "Serving all faiths," Francie read. "Owned and operated by Luther and Theodore T. Ade. When you're in need, call for Ade." "Also," the man added, "competitive pricing. But mainly, first in the phone book."

He disappeared behind a door, and Francie jogged from foot to foot to warm herself—it had been a long walk from the last stop on the bus line. She looked around. Not much to see: a counter holding some file folders, a calendar and a mirror on the wall, several chairs, and a round table on which lay a dog-eared copy of *Consumer Reports.* So this was where her mother had got to—nowhere at all.

"Won't be another minute." The man was back in the room. "Teddy T.'s just doing the finishing touches."

Finishing touches? Francie blanched—she'd almost forgotten what this place was. "You're not using lipstick, are you?" she managed to say. "Mother hated it."

The man glanced rapidly at the mirror and then back at Francie.

"Lipstick," Francie said. "On her."

" 'On her . . .' " the man said. As he stared at Francie, the room lost its color and flattened; swarming black dots began to absorb the table and the counter and the mirror. "I'm very sorry if that's what you had in mind, Miss, ah . . ." dots streamed out of the dot man to say. The riffling of file folders amplified into a deafening splash of dots, and then Francie heard, "I'm very, very sorry, because those were definitely not the instructions. I've got the fax right here—from your dad, right? Yup, Mr. McIntyre."

Francie's vision and hearing cleared before her muscles got a grip on themselves. She was on the floor, splayed out, confusingly, as her mother must have been on the ice, and the man was kneeling next to her, holding a glass of water, although, also confusingly, her hair and clothing were drenched—sweat, she noted, amazed.

"O.K. now?" the man asked. Next to him was a cardboard box, about two feet square, tied up with twine.

Francie nodded.

"Happens," the man said, sympathetically.

Francie finished the water slowly and carefully while the man fetched a little wooden handle and affixed it to the twine around the box. Things had gone far beyond misrepresentation now.

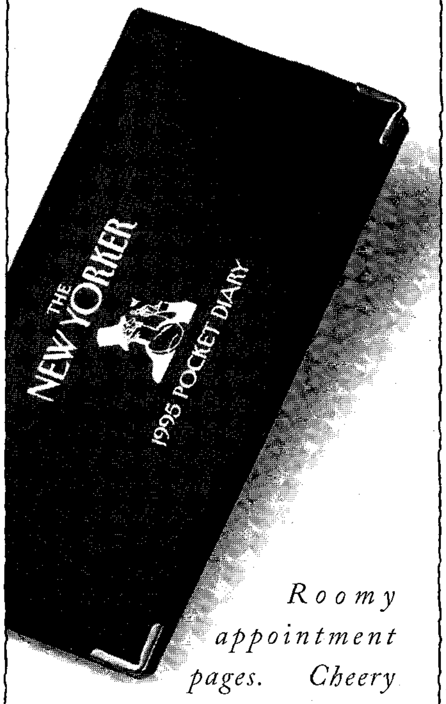
"And here's the irony," the man said, "We deliver."

All night long, Francie fell, plummeting through the air. When she finally managed to pry herself awake with the help of the pale wands of light along the blinds, she found herself sprawled forcefully back on her mattress, aching, as if she'd been hurled from a great height. On the kitchen floor was the cardboard box. Francie hefted it experimentally—yesterday it had been intolerably heavy; this morning it was intolerably light.

O.K., first in the phone book, true enough. ("See display ad, page 182.") "Hi," Francie said when the man answered. "This is Francie McIntyre. The girl who fainted yesterday? Could you—" For an instant, Miss Healy stood in front of her again, looking helpless. "First of all," Francie said. "I mean, thanks for the water. But second of all, could you give me my father's address, please? And, I guess, his name."

Kevin McIntyre—not all that amazing, once you got your head around the notion that he happened to be alive. And he lived on a street called West Tenth, in New York City. Francie looked out the window to the place where there had been for some years now a silently shrieking crowd and a puddle of blood, into which long, splotty raindrops were now falling. Strange—it was raining into the puddle, but at the level of the window it was snowing.

In the closet she found an old plastic slicker. She took it from the hanger and



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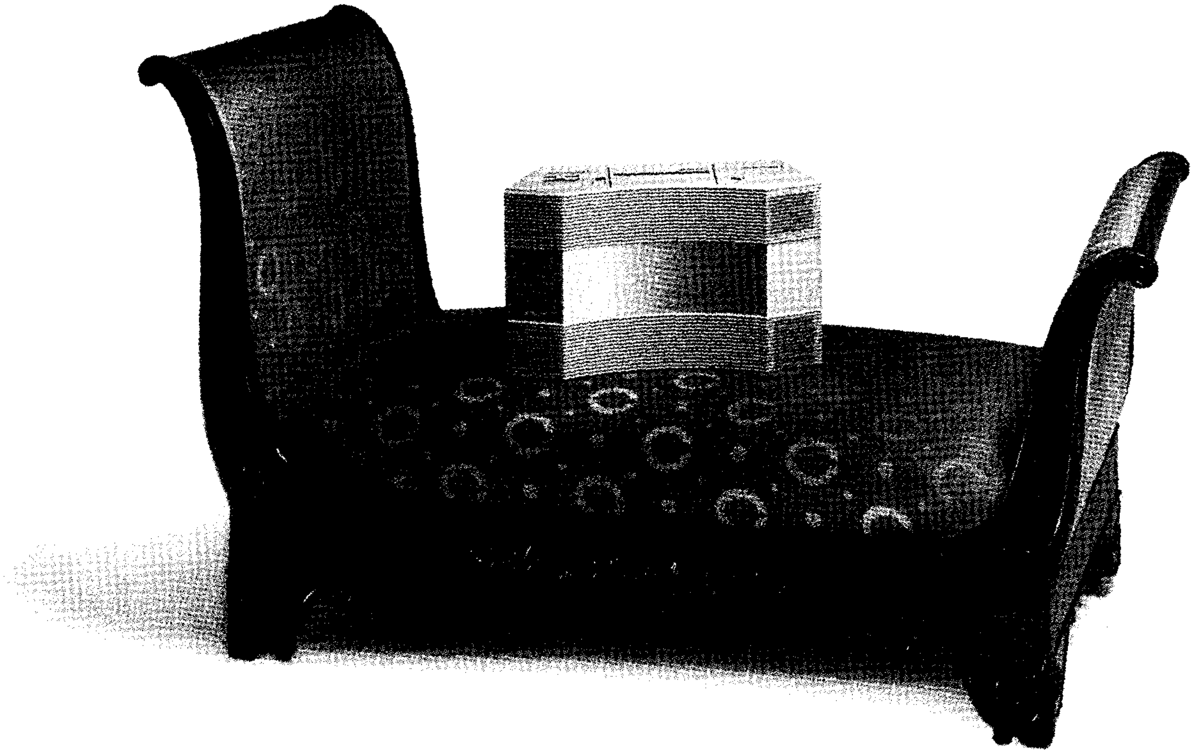

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wrapped it around the cardboard box, securing it roughly with tape. Yes, everything had to be *just right*. But the only thing she'd actually *said* to Francie in all these sixteen years was a lie.

Francie looked around at the bluish stillness. "Hello hello," she called. Was that her voice? Was that her mother's silence, fading? What had become of everything that had gone on here? "Hello hello," she said. "Hello hello hello hello."

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THE bus ticket cost Francie eighteen dollars. Which left not all that much of the seventy-three and a bit that she'd saved up, fortunately, to get her back to school and, in fact, Francie thought, to last for the rest of her life. "But, hey," Jessica returned just long enough to point out, "you'll be getting free therapy."

Francie put her box on the overhead rack and scrambled to a window seat. *West Tenth Street*. West of what? The tenth of how many? How on earth was she going to find her way around? If only her mother had let her go last year when Jessica invited her to spend Thanksgiving in New York with her family. But Francie's mother had been able to picture Jessica's mother just as easily as Francie had been able to. "Out of the question," she'd said.

" . . . if *there's no spouse* . . ." So, her mother must have used his name on that form! They must never have got a divorce. Could he be a bigamist? Some people were. And he might think Francie was coming to blackmail him. He might decide to kill her right then and there—just reach over and grab a . . . a . . .

Well, one thing—he wasn't living on the street; she had his address. And he wasn't totally feebleminded; he'd sent a fax. Whatever he was, at least what he wasn't was everything except that. And the main thing he wasn't, for absolute certain, was a guy who'd been mashed by a bus.

"Would you like a hankie?" the lady in the seat next to Francie's asked, and Francie realized that she had wiped her eyes and nose on her sleeve. "I have one right here."

"Oh, wow," Francie said gratefully, and blew her nose on the handkerchief the lady produced from a large, shabby cloth sack on her lap.

Despite the shabbiness of the sack, Francie noticed, the lady was tidy. And pretty. Not pretty, really, but exact—with exact little hands and an exact little face. "Do you live in New York?" she asked Francie.

"I've never even been there," Francie said. "My roommate from school invited me to visit once, but my mother wouldn't let me go." Jessica's family had a whole apartment building to themselves, Jessica had told her; she'd called it a "brownstone." It was when Francie had foolishly reported this interesting fact that her mother put her foot down. "Actually," Francie added, "I think my mother was afraid. We had a giant fight about it."

"A mother worries, of course," the lady said. "But it's a lovely city. People tend to have exaggerated fears about New York."

"Yeah," Francie said. "Well, I guess maybe my mother had exaggerated fears about a lot of things. She—" The box! Where was the box? Oh, there—on the rack. Francie's heart was beating rapidly; clashing in her brain were the desire to reveal and the desire to conceal what had become, in the short course of the conversation, a secret. "Do you live in New York?" she asked.

"Technically, no," the lady said. "But I've spent a great deal of happy time there. I know the city very well."

Francie's pounding heart flipped over. "Have you ever been to West Tenth Street?" she asked.

"I have," the lady said.

Francie didn't dare look at the lady. "Is it a nice street?" she asked carefully.

"Very nice," the lady said. "All the streets are very nice. But it seems a strange day to be going there."

"It's strange for me," Francie said loudly. "My mother died."

"I'm terribly sorry," the lady said. "My mother died as well. But evidently no one was hurt in the accident."

"Huh?" Francie said.

"Amazing as it seems," the lady said, "I believe no one was hurt. Although you'd think, wouldn't you, that an accident of that sort—a blimp, simply sailing into a building . . ."

Francie felt slightly sickened—she

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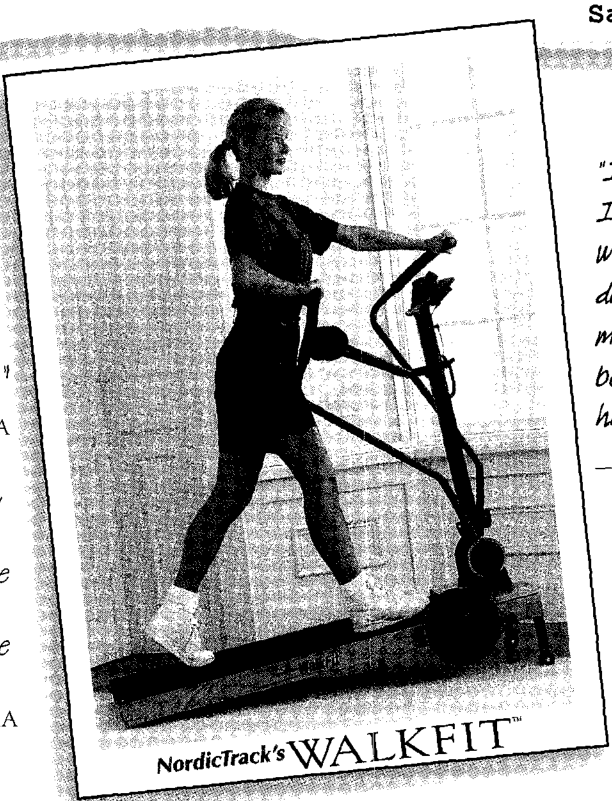

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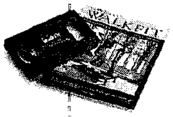

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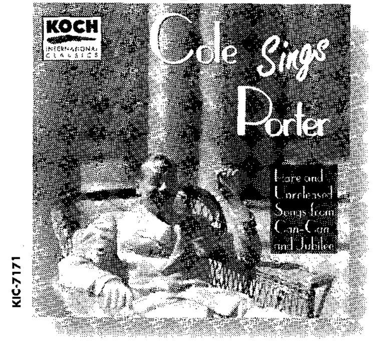

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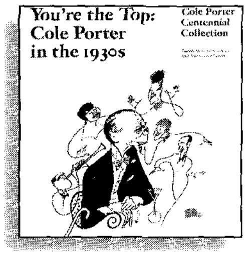
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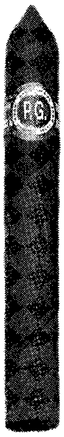

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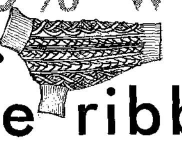

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wasn't going to have another opportunity to tell someone for the first time that her mother had died, to learn what that meant by hearing the words as she said them for the first time. "How could a blimp just go crashing into a building?" she said crossly.

"These are things we can't understand," the lady said with dignity.

Oops, Francie thought—she was really going to have to watch it; she kept being mean to people, and just completely by mistake.

" 'How could such-and-such a thing happen?' we say," the lady said. "As if this moment or that moment were fitted together, from . . . bits, and one bit or another bit might be some type of mistake. 'There's the building,' people say. 'It's a building. There's the blimp. It's a blimp.' That's the way people think."

Francie peered at the lady. "Wow . . ." she said, considering.

"You see, people tend to settle for the first explanation. People tend to take things at face value."

"Oh, definitely," Francie said. "I mean, absolutely."

"But a blimp or a building cannot be a mistake," the lady said. "Obviously. A blimp or a building are evidence. Oh, goodness—" she said as the bus slowed down. She stood up and gave her sack a little shake. "Here I am."

"Evidence . . ." Francie frowned; Cynthia's red jacket flashed against the snow. "Evidence, of, like . . . the future?"

"Well, more or less," the lady said, a bit impatiently, as the bus stopped in front of a small building. "Evidence of the present, really, I suppose. You know what I mean." She reached into her sack and drew out some papers. "You seem like a very sensitive person—I wonder if you'd be interested in learning about my situation. This is my stop, but you're welcome to the document. It's extra."

"Thank you," Francie said, although the situation she'd really like to learn about, she thought, was her own. "Wait—" The lady was halfway down the aisle. "I've still got your handkerchief—"

"Just hold on to it, dear," the lady called back. "I think it's got your name on it."

The manuscript had a title, "The Triumph of Untruth: A Society That

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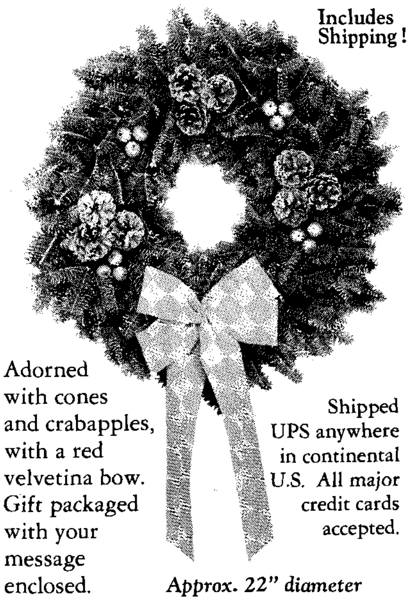

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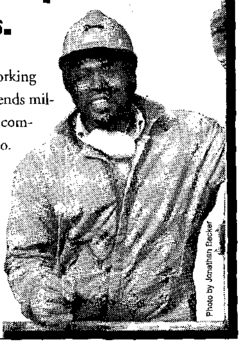

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Denies the Workings of the World Puts Us at Ever Greater Risk." "I'd like to introduce myself," it began. "My name is Iris Ackerman."

Hmm, Francie thought: Two people with situations, sitting right next to each other. Coincidence? She glanced up. The sickening thing was that there were a lot of people on this bus.

"My name is Iris Ackerman," Francie read again. "And my belief is that one must try to keep an open mind in the face of puzzling experiences, no matter how laughable this approach may subsequently appear. For many years I maintained the attitude that I was merely a victim of circumstance, or chance, and perhaps now my reluctance to accept the ugliness of certain realities will be considered (with hindsight!) willful obtuseness."

Francie's attention sharpened—she read on. "Certainly my persecution (by literally thousands of men, on the street, in public buildings, and even, before I was forced to flee it, in my own apartment) is a known fact. (One, or several, of these ruffians went so far as to hide himself in my closet, and even under my bed, when least expected.)

"Why, you ask, should so large and powerful an organization concentrate its efforts on tormenting a single individual? This I do not know. It is not (please believe me) false humility that causes me to say I do not consider myself to be in any way 'special.' "

Francie sighed. She rested her eyes for a moment on the weedy lot moving by out the window. Not much point, probably, trying to figure out what Iris had been talking about. Yup, she should have known the minute Iris said the word "blimp."

"I know only," the manuscript continued, "that there was a moment when I fell into the channel, so to speak, of what was ultimately to be revealed as 'my life': In the fall of 1965, when I was twenty years old, I encountered a mathematics professor, an older man, whom I respected deeply. I became increasingly fascinated by certain theories he held regarding the nature of numbers, but he, alas, misunderstood my youthful enthusiasm, and although he had a wife and several children, I was soon forced to rebuff him.

"I continued to feel nothing but the

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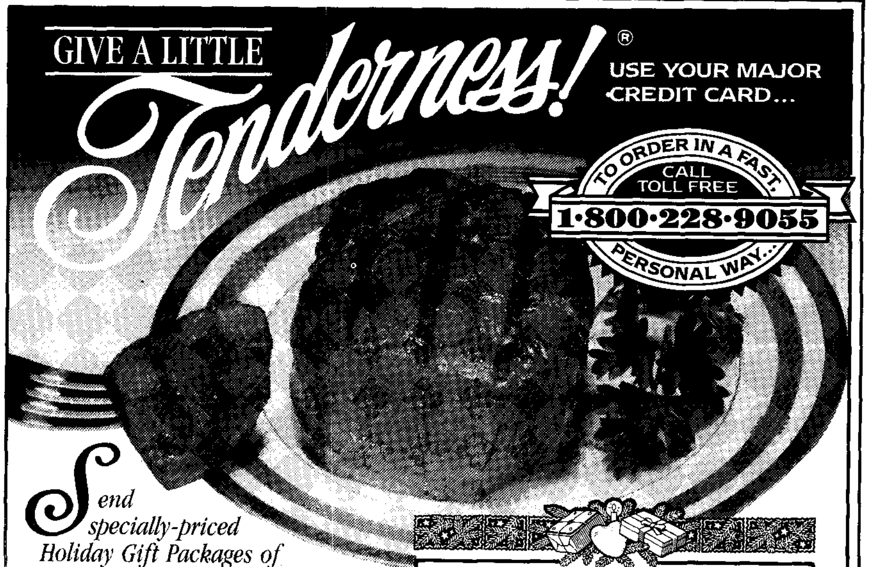

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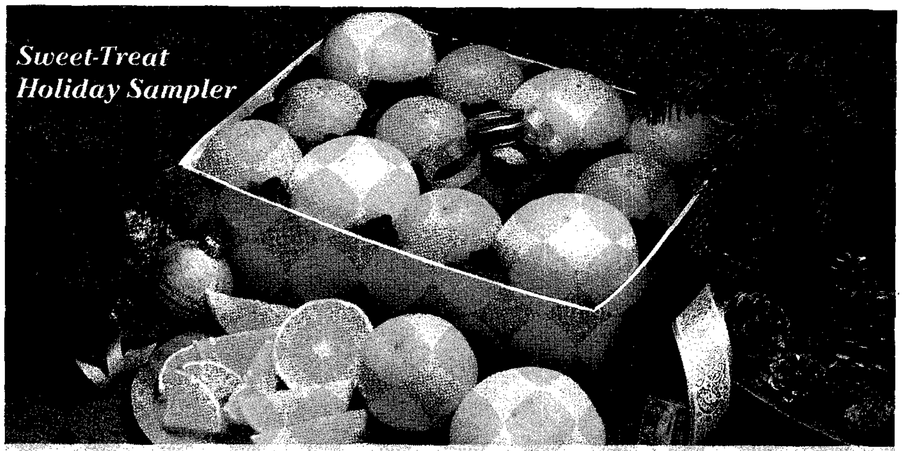

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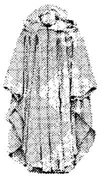

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purest and most intense admiration for him, and would gladly have continued our acquaintance. Nevertheless, this professor (Doctor N.) terminated all contact with me (or affected to do so), going so far as to change his telephone number to an unlisted one. Yet, at the same time, he began to pursue me in secret.

"For a period of many months I could detect only the suggestion of his presence—a sort of emanation. Do you know the sensation of a whisper? Or there would sometimes be a telltale hardening, a *crunchiness*, near me. Often, however, I could detect nothing other than a slight discoloration of the atmosphere. . . . And then, one day, as I was walking to the library, he was there.

"It was a day of violent heat. People were milling on the sidewalks, waiting. One felt one was penetrating again and again a poisonous, yellow-gray screen that clung to the mouth and the nostrils. I had almost reached the library when I understood that he was behind me. So close, in fact, that he could fit his body to mine. I had never imagined how hard a man's arms could feel! His legs, too, which were pressed up against mine, were like iron, or lead, and he dug his chin into my temple as he clamped himself around me like a butcher about to slash the throat of a calf. I cried out; the bloated sky split, and out poured a filthy rain. The faces of all the people around me began to wash away in inky streaks. A terrible thing had happened to me—A terrible thing had happened—*it was like water gushing out of my body.*

"Since then, my life has not belonged to me. Why do I not go to the authorities? Of course, I have done so. And they have added their mockery to the mockery of my tormentors: *Psychological help!* Tell me: Will 'psychological help' alter my history? Will 'psychological help' locate Dr. N.? Any information regarding my case will be fervently appreciated. Please contact: Iris Ackerman, P.O. Box 139775, Rochester, N.Y. Yours sincerely, Iris Ackerman."

ENCLAVES of people wrapped in ragged blankets huddled against the walls of the glaring station. Policemen sauntered past in pairs, fingering their truncheons. Danger at every

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turn, Francie thought. Poor Iris—it was horrible to contemplate. And obviously love didn't exactly clarify the mind, either.

You had to give her credit, though—she was brave. At least she tried to figure things out, instead of just consulting, for example, the wall. To *really* figure things out. Francie blew her nose again. For all the good that did.

Any information regarding my case will be fervently appreciated. But this was not the moment, Francie thought, to lose her nerve. The huge city was just outside the door, and there was no one else to go to West Tenth Street. There was no one else to hear what she had to hear. There was no one else to try to understand, or to protect her mother, or to remember her mother with accuracy. There was no one else to not get the story wrong. There was no one else to reserve judgment. Francie closed one hand tightly around her new handkerchief, and with the other she gripped the handle on her box. The city rose up around her through a peach-colored sunset; now there was no more time.

The man who stood at the door of the apartment (K. McIntyre, #4B) was nice-looking. Nice-looking, and weirdly unfamiliar, as if the whole thing, maybe, were a complete mistake, Francie thought over and over in the striated extrusion of eternity (that was then and this is then; that was now and this is now) it had taken the door to open.

She was filthy, she thought. She smelled. She'd been wearing the same dress, the same socks, for days.

"Can I help you?" he said.

He had no idea why she was there! "Kevin McIntyre?" she said.

"Not back yet," he said. His gaze was pleasant—serene and searching. "Any minute."

He brought her into a big room and sat her down near a fireplace, in a squashy chair. He reached for the chain of a lamp, but Francie shook her head.

"No?" He looked at her. "I'm having coffee," he said. "Want a cup? Or something else—water? Wine? Soda?"

Francie shook her head again.

"Anyhow," he said. "I'm Alex. I'll be in back if you want me."

Francie nodded.

"Can I put your package somewhere

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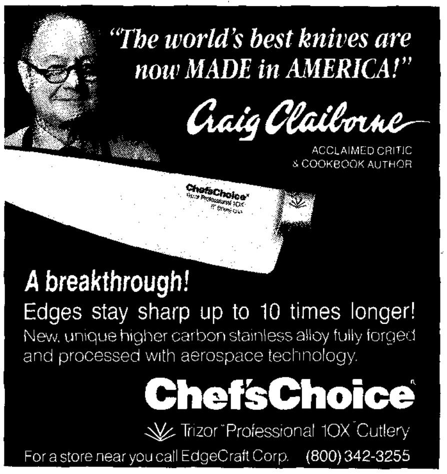

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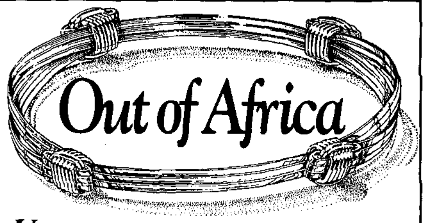

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for you, at least?" he asked, but Francie folded her arms around the box and rested her cheek against its plastic wrapping.

"Suit yourself," the man said. He paused at the entrance to the room. "You're not a very demanding guest, you know."

Francie felt his attention hesitate and then withdraw. After a moment, she raised her head—yes, he was gone. But then there he was again in the entranceway. "Strange day, huh?" he paused there to say. "Starting with the blimp."

The night before Francie left school, when she'd known so much more about her mother and her father than she knew now, she and Jessica had lain in their beds, talking feverishly. "Anything can happen at any moment," Jessica kept exclaiming. "Anything can just *happen*."

"It's worse than that," Francie had said (and she could still close her eyes and see Cynthia coming up that hill). "It's much, much worse." And Jessica had burst into noisy sobs, as if she knew exactly what Francie meant, as if it were she who had brushed against the burning cable of her life.

Her body, Francie noticed, felt as if it had been crumpled up in a ball—she should stretch. *Strange day*. Well, true enough. That was something they could all be sure of. This room was really nice, though. Pretty and pleasantly messy, with interesting stuff all over the place. Interesting, nice stuff . . .

Twilight was thickening like a dark garden, and paintings and drawings glimmered behind it on the walls. As scary as it was to be waiting for him, it was nice to be having this quiet time. This quiet time together, in a way.

Peach, rose, pale green—yes, poor guy; it might be a moment he'd look back on—last panels of tinted light were falling through the window. He might be walking up the street this very second. Stopping to buy a newspaper.

She closed her eyes. He fished in his pocket for change, and then glanced up sharply. Holding her breath, Francie drew herself back into the darkness. *It's your imagination*, she promised; he was going to have to deal with her soon enough—no sense making him see her until he actually had to. ♦

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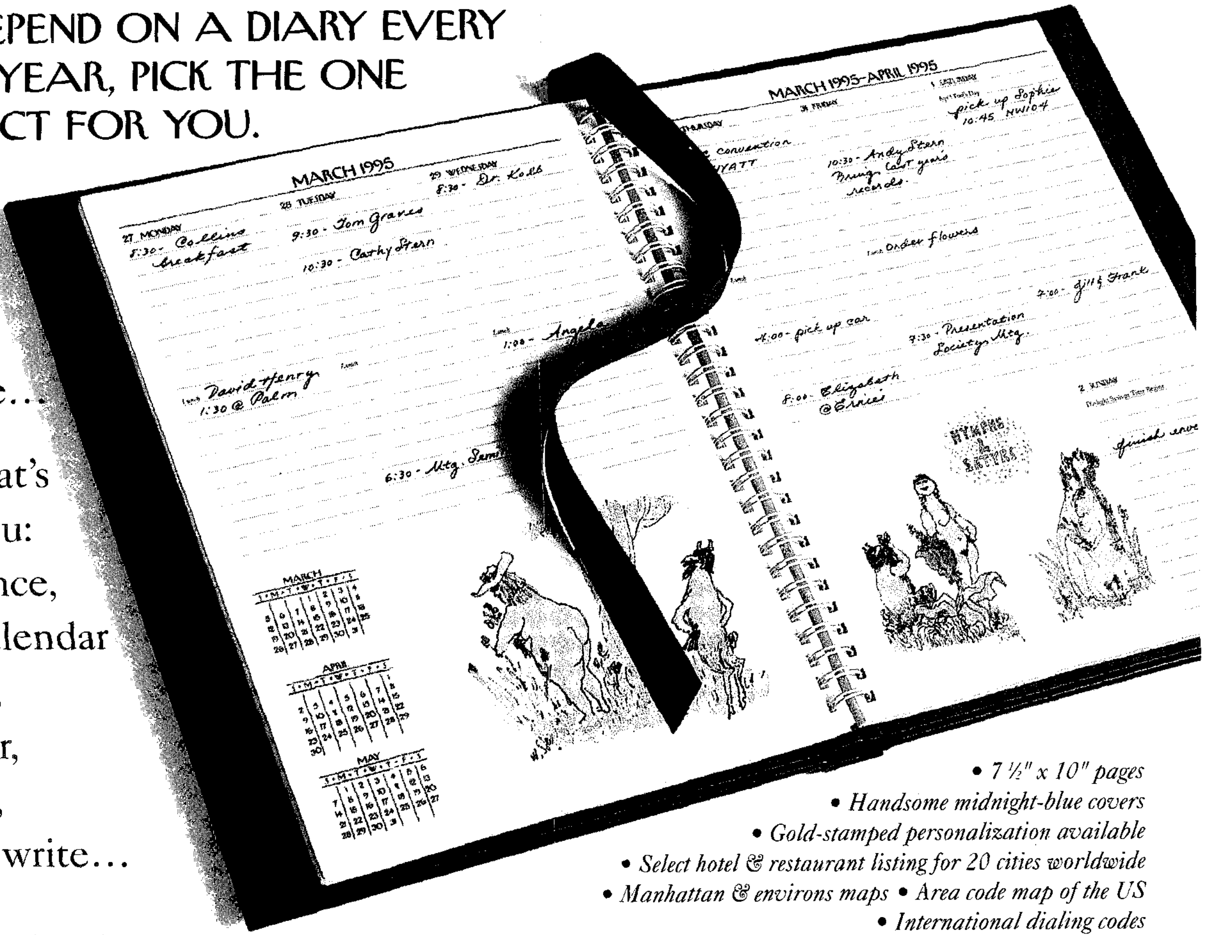

MARCH 1995
27 MONDAY
28 TUESDAY
29 WEDNESDAY
7:30 - Collins breakfast
9:30 - Tom Graves
10:30 - Cathy Stern
8:30 - Dr. Kolb
1:00 - Angela
David Henry 1:30 @ Palm
6:30 - Mtg. Sam
MARCH
APRIL
MAY
MARCH 1995–APRIL 1995
THURSDAY
31 FRIDAY
1 SATURDAY
Convention HYATT
10:30 - Andy Stern Bring CDT years records
pick up Sophie 10:45 NW104
Order flowers
4:00 - pick up car
7:30 - Presentation Society Mtg.
8:00 - Elizabeth @ Elaine's
4:00 - Jill & Frank
2 SUNDAY
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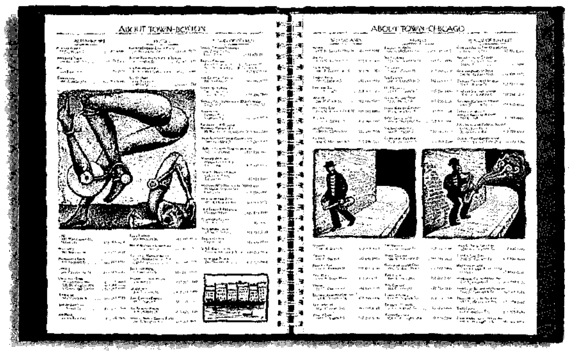

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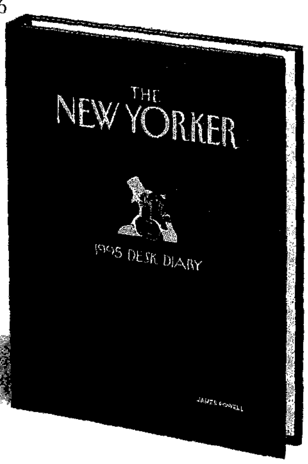


THE NEW YORKER
1995 DESK DIARY

THE CRITICS

THE THEATRE

CINÉMA UN-VÉRITÉ

BY JOHN LAHR

IN the expensive sixteen-month progress of Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Sunset Boulevard" from London to Los Angeles and on to New York—perhaps the longest rehearsal period in musical history—the change of stars has made the headlines, but the change of design has made the show. Lloyd Webber's homage to the classic Billy Wilder–Charles Brackett 1950 screen fable of Hollywood corruption and dementia has gone from Technicolor to black-and-white, from glitz to gothic. This chromatic about-face, which is like changing palettes from David Hockney to Franz Kline, has been engineered by the production designer, John Napier, and the lighting designer, Andrew Bridge, under Trevor Nunn's elegant direction. Now the "Sunset Boulevard" logo, which is projected onto a scrim as the show begins, is leached of sunlight; the fronds of palm trees looming above the events cast long, moody shadows of gray, not green; and the swimming pool from which the dead screenwriter Joe Gillis, who narrates the story, is plucked is no longer aquamarine but a mottled, murky charcoal. "I think the greater degree of darkness helps in presenting a Greek tragic structure," Nunn says, referring to the flat tire that first sends Joe Gillis rolling up to Norma Desmond's garage. "We can't help reflecting that had Joe's tire burst fifty yards later it would have been a different story. Now the very first utterance that Norma makes in Joe's hearing—a line that was always there—has a proleptic quality. She says, 'You there! Why are you so late?' It's as if the infernal machine that begins to go into operation while he's there had been waiting for him." But in this case it's an infernal Andrew Lloyd Webber fun machine, whose thirty-seven-and-a-half-million-dollar pre-opening advance sale is the largest in recorded show-biz history. In this well-packaged shadow world, there is no resonance, no irony, no ambiguity but only the *look* of resonance, irony, and ambiguity.

At the center of the show's calculating heart is the manipulative Norma Desmond, a part that Glenn Close makes her own. She may not possess the big, almost freakish sound of Patti LuPone, who starred in London, but she has something more important both for Lloyd Webber's musical cartoons and for the melodrama of the story. Close is commanding. She takes the stage with a star's authority, and she knows—as LuPone didn't—about exits and entrances: how to seize the moment and hold it. In her second song, "With One Look," as she holds her chin high with what Tennessee Williams called "the stiff-necked pride of the defeated" and holds her jewelled left hand regally extended in front of her, Close has the audience roaring with pleasure at the memory of her silent-film greatness. And when she sings, "With one look . . . I play every part," she falls momentarily into an exaggerated Gloria Swanson pose, acting the song with genuine brio. Close has two vocal ranges, and there's no smooth transition from her full voice to her head voice. Her best moment—and it is genuinely moving—is when Norma returns to the studio under the misapprehension that her script has been accepted by Cecil B. De Mille (actually, it's her classic Isotta-Fraschini limousine that the studio wants to hire), and a technician, recognizing her, swings a spotlight on her face. Close makes us feel the blessing of being once again in the light. The beam warms her face, and she rises to it as if it were an embrace. She makes the sadness of Desmond's solitude and the exciting promise of her reconnecting with her craft both vivid and convincing. (She's less persuasive when she goes into hysterical collapse in order to force Joe to stay with her.) In one of Don Black and Christopher Hampton's best songs, "As If We Never Said Goodbye," Close sings to the people on the set:

> I've spent so many mornings
> Just trying to resist you
> I'm trembling now.
> You can't know how
> I've missed you.

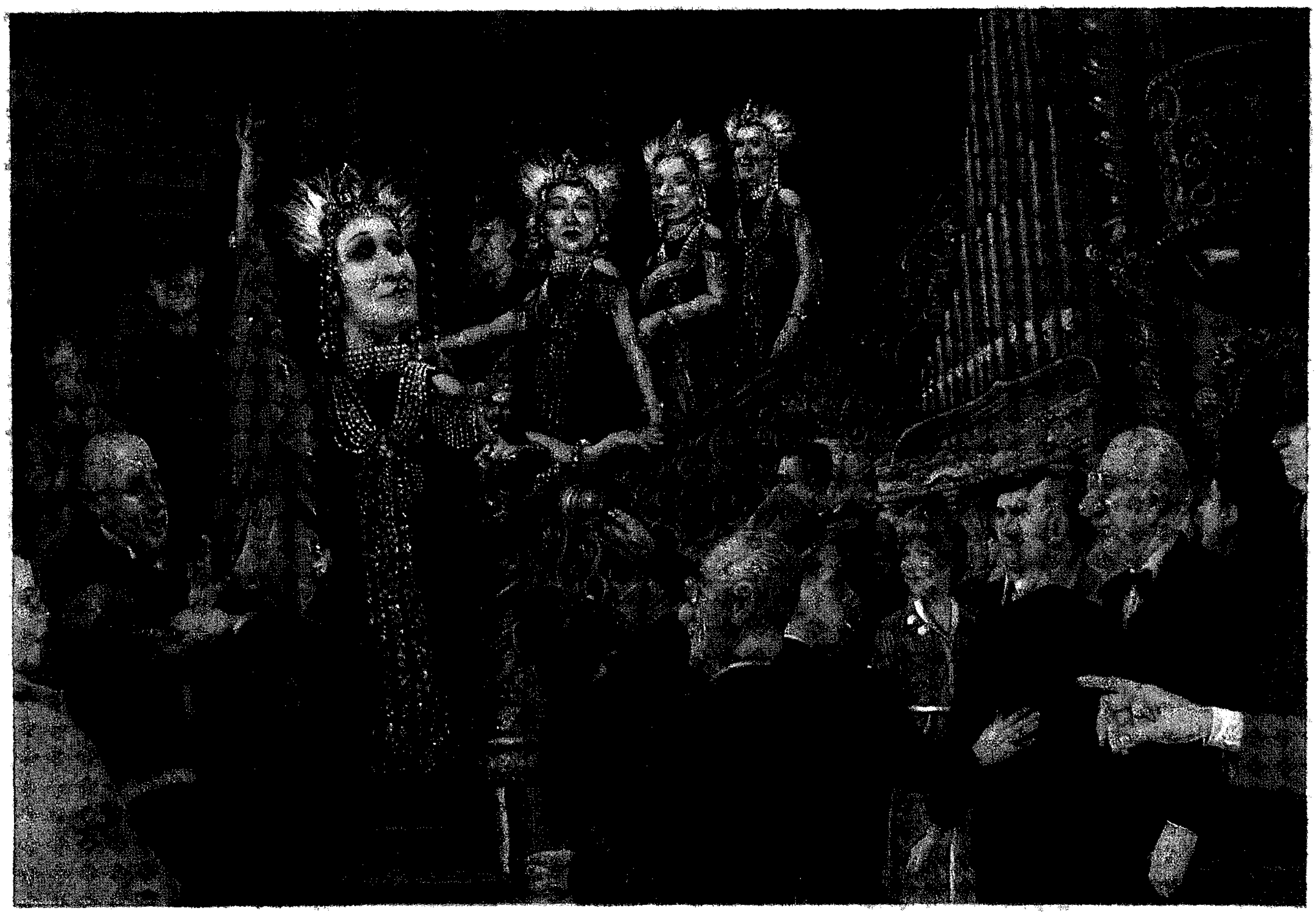
Even if Close can't quite hit the high notes, she makes the customers think she can. She sells the songs hard and well. And at the finale, when Norma Desmond descends the winding, filigreed staircase decked out like a Christmas tree, with the red string that once wrapped her comeback screenplay now wrapped around her like holiday bunting, Close is in her element and is playing the part for all its swooning melodrama: the toothy frozen smiles, the rolling eyes, the mad exaggerated gestures, the crouching terror above the balustrade as she is coaxed out of her aerie by her butler, Max, to face the camera ("And now, Mr. De Mille, I'm ready for my closeup") and to face the music for murdering Joe.

Max, who caters to Norma's every fantastic whim, and who turns out to be a former husband, is played by the expert George Hearn, and he brings to the role the right touch of gravity and insolence. He gives dimension to the character and is a substantial improvement over his English counterpart. Hearn provides emotional ballast to Desmond's flighty hauteur. Alan Campbell does well as Joe Gillis, trapped by intellectual arrogance and impecunious circumstance into being Norma's rewrite man and then lover man. Campbell delivers his best song, "Sunset Boulevard," with appropriate disgust at Hollywood, and his last song with comparable disgust at himself. Alice Ripley is stuck with the thankless task of serving as Joe's conscience and moonlighting script collaborator, Betty Schaefer, but she and her fine voice make the inevitable romance almost credible.

"Sunset Boulevard" has enormous technical panache, and yet it is weirdly unmoving. Part of the problem is a moral confusion at the center of Norma Desmond's story. For commercial reasons, the show needs us to feel good about Desmond. But there's no way around it: she's a vainglorious, hysterical, humorless, narcissistic, tyrannical piece of work. Nunn brilliantly makes the point as Gillis embraces Norma at the end of Act I: in the clinch, Desmond's hand is splayed above him like a claw. Gillis has made a pact with the Devil, and Norma Desmond is it. Still, the show asks us to see her as somehow heroic because, so Max sings, she never surrendered her dream: "She'll be the very last one to surrender, I will not allow her to surrender." Norma herself repeats the notion at the finale. If this is meant to be ironic, the irony is lost on the audience, and it's certainly not in the music. Desmond, who walked away from Hollywood when movies first talked, is all surrender. She has surrendered to the spell of glamour; to a life of luxury; to her celebrity illusions; to her neurotic weakness. She lives her life unreflectively and entirely in retreat. She is defended against loss, but is unable and unwilling to fight for herself and forces others to do the fighting for her. She's odious, and her lunatic dreams are destructive, yet the show tries to make us feel that there is a kind of grandeur in her clinging to them. Inevitably, the character and her predicament go nowhere. This is telegraphed musically by the show's large number of reprises, which would be unnecessary if the plot line or Desmond's personality developed.

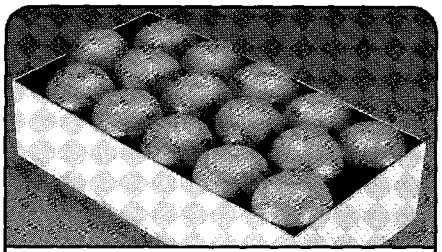
Trevor Nunn's direction is, in its way, flawless. But the effect of all this polish is like fine-tuning an Edsel. In spite of all its streamlined sheen, the design never quite captures the imagination. The reason is simple: the show's challenge is not to do a musical like theatre but to do theatre like a movie. (Even the program list of scenes is set out with the interior/exterior delineation of a screenplay.) Nunn provides us with a crosscut car chase, and with a set—Desmond's rococo mansion—that actually rises up and slides forward and back to simulate a closeup and dissolve. "The attempt of the design," he told me, "is to find some liquid way of getting from one well-known image to another." As a scheme for a musical, "Sunset Boulevard" is radically conservative and retrograde. So is Lloyd Webber's music, which never risks interpretation but, like underscoring, illustrates rather than illuminates character. Lloyd Webber paints moods. He's not a real musical dramatist, but Nunn makes him look like one.

The Broadway musical has always believed in giving the public what it wants, and it's a sign of our winded times that what the public seems to want now is film. In its heyday, the musical made stories that were turned into movies; now, in its dotage, the movies make the sto-



Casta Diva (right to left): While Betty Buckley takes a break from London, Patti LuPone counts her million, and Faye Dunaway awaits her day in court, Glenn Close triumphs on Broadway.

C. F. PAYNE



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ries that are turned into shows. This decadent trend has been a long time coming. At the apogee of the arc of decline is "A Little Night Music"; at the nadir are "Zorba" and "Beauty and the Beast." "Sunset Boulevard" falls somewhere in the middle. The show will run for a decade; the T-shirts will earn mountains of greenbacks; and the music will be forgotten by the time you're on Forty-fourth Street hailing a cab home. To paraphrase Norma Desmond: musicals are still big, it's the imaginations that got small.

To say that Sam Shepard's "Simpatico" (at the Public Theatre) is a shaggy-dog story is too imprecise. Call it shaggy or a dog. It gives me no pleasure to report this. For almost thirty years, Shepard's plays—from the early ones, like "La Turista," to the rock fantasy "The Tooth of Crime" and the Pulitzer Prize-winning "Buried Child"—have been a defining part of American theatre. So what's happened? Shepard seems to have caught a touch of the artistic temperament. Playwriting is something, by his account, that he can do with one hand. "You have to do it on an open highway," he told the *Times*, about his craft. "On Highway 40 West or some of those big open highways, you can hold the wheel with one hand and write with the other." On the evidence of "Simpatico," Shepard should stop the car and try doing the job with both hands. Here, in a rambling, self-indulgent daydream that's supposed to read as an allegory of America's guilt-ridden betrayals and barbarous isolation, Shepard tells a sort of story about two guys, Carter (Ed Harris) and Vinnie (Fred Ward), who have framed a horse-racing commissioner with compromising pornographic photographs. The ensuing three hours are a collision of solitudes, in which the audience meets all the players in this elusive scam. But long before the curtain comes down on "Simpatico" the audience has stopped listening. It's one thing to withhold information; it's another to withhold thought. As I sat through the last, turgid hour, I pondered the insolence of authorship, and G. K. Chesterton's essay on Whistler came to mind. He wrote, in "Heretics," "There are many real tragedies of the artistic temperament, tragedies of vanity or violence or fear. But the great tragedy of the artistic temperament is that it cannot produce any art." ♦

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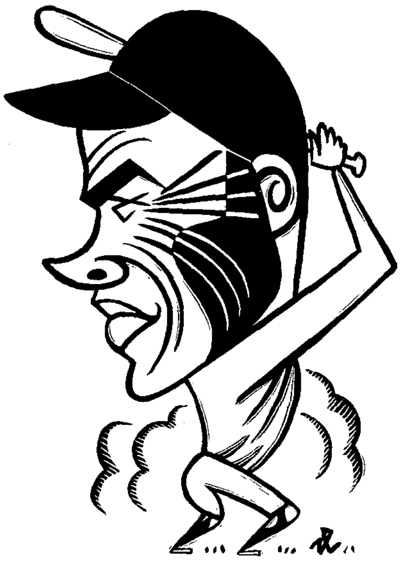
THE CURRENT CINEMA

THE OLD TIMER'S GAME

BY TERRENCE RAFFERTY

THE subject of Ron Shelton's brilliant "Cobb" is Ty Cobb (played by Tommy Lee Jones), who was, by consensus, the greatest all-around baseball player who ever lived. In the course of Cobb's twenty-four-year career, which ended in 1928, he batted over .300 twenty-three times (failing only in his rookie season, with the Detroit Tigers, in which he was called up late and appeared in just forty-one games) and over .400 three times; he led the American League in hitting twelve times, and finished with a lifetime average of .367, which is still the best in the history of the game. His baserunning skills were as remarkable as his prowess at the plate: he retired with stolen-base records, for a single season and for a career, that would stand for decades. And no major-league ballplayer has ever scored more runs than Cobb.



Settling the score:
Tommy Lee Jones in "Cobb."

Reviewing his accomplishments, you can't help lapsing into the breathless superlatives of sports biographies aimed at juvenile fans (or hero-worshipping adults). Everything about Cobb's play is "the best" this and "the most" that, and judgments of his character tend to be rendered in awe-struck absolutes, too. Cobb was—also by consensus—the meanest, the dirtiest, the most arrogant, and the most unscrupulous ballplayer of any era. His aggressiveness as a runner—he is said to have sharpened his spikes before every game—started countless brawls with opponents, and he didn't mind scrapping with his own teammates, either. Off the field, he was just as dangerous: he always carried a gun and wasn't shy about waving it around at the slightest provocation; he once beat up a disabled fan who had been heckling him; on several occasions, he attacked blacks (of both sexes) who had not, he felt, shown him the proper deference; he almost certainly abused his first wife; he may even have killed a man in a street fight. We like our sports figures to be larger than life, and in this respect Cobb also sets the standard: he's the *most* larger than life.

The movie begins, in the manner of "Citizen Kane," with a mock newsreel, whose mellow-voiced narrator celebrates Cobb's diamond heroics and puts a positive spin on his less savory qualities. Even a statement like "He turned the game into war" is read in such a soothing tone that it sounds like praise, and the newsreel builds to a climactic burst of words-fail-us admiration: "What a ballplayer!" After the newsreel, Shelton starts telling the story that really interests him—of Cobb in the last year of his life, fighting a losing battle with cancer (and a host of other ailments) and a battle, perhaps winnable, with history. It's 1960, and Cobb, who is seventy-three, has decided to write his memoirs. He summons a well-known sportswriter named Al Stump (Robert Wuhl) to his mountain lodge in Lake Tahoe to discuss collaborating on the book; Stump, who is both awed by Cobb's greatness and intimidated by his ever-present Luger, takes the thankless job. The story Cobb wants to tell is, of course, entirely self-serving. He means to repel what he sees as the most serious threats to his status as baseball's all-time best: the persistence of his reputation as a thug, and the change in baseball from

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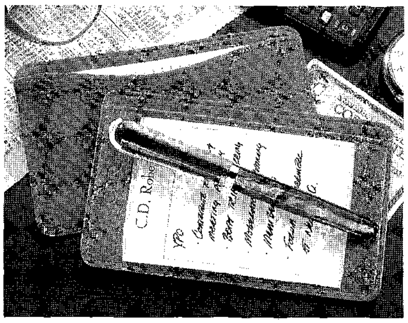

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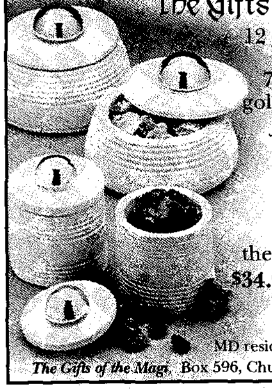

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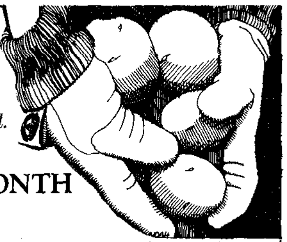

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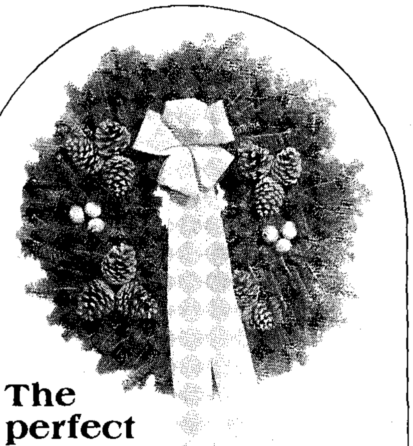
the "scientific" game—of speed, guile, and timely hitting—at which he excelled, to the power baseball popularized by the home-run-hitting feats of his rival, Babe Ruth. "My entire life," Cobb tells Stump, "I've been misunderstood." Stump, after observing his hero at close range for a while, becomes determined to tell the truth, which is, he says, that Cobb "was not misunderstood; he was understood perfectly well." Their collaboration turns into an odd, often hilarious duel of wits—the sort of game at which Cobb, even in his diminished state, is practically unbeatable.

The dying Cobb that Shelton and Jones have put on the screen is a fascinating and appalling creature—a monster of mythic proportions, bellowing and thrashing and belching fire right to the end. He's a man who sees no reason he shouldn't always get his way; he views other people primarily as impediments to the satisfaction of his desires. Except for Stump—whom he needs—the hero of "Cobb" is completely alone, and his proud, willful self-sufficiency may be the most terrifying thing about him. The movie's one extended sequence of baseball action shows Cobb making a long and absurdly eventful trip around the bases, manufacturing a run on his own. He seems to be playing a private, one-man game, and by his own rules. He doubles, and then steals third, then home, starting a fight at each base. It's an amazing feat, which Cobb has undertaken, characteristically, for selfish reasons: to demonstrate his superiority, to embarrass his opponents, and to win a bet with a couple of bookies. (There's no indication that the game is important for the Tigers, or that Cobb's strenuously achieved run has any impact on its outcome.) What's really extraordinary is that such apparently flimsy motivations could produce such a spectacular result—that egotism alone could make a man play a game with this violent, beautiful intensity. The fierce look on Cobb's face as he charges down the third-base line, simply to prove that he can do it, is unaccountable. And the end of the play—a jarring collision with the catcher at the plate—seems to capture the essence of Cobb's awful greatness. A slow-motion reprise of the instant of impact is the movie's final scene, summing up the life and death of its fearsome pro-



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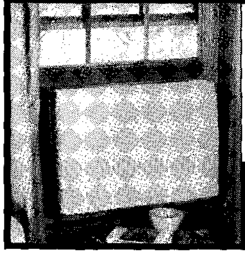

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tagonist. We see him sliding into the plate with one leg raised high and aimed at the catcher's groin. "Cobb" is a movie about a one-of-a-kind man facing death: it's a snapshot of Ty Cobb heading home.

The miracle of "Cobb" is that Shelton finds so much humor in his hero's intransigence. (That's what separates this picture from "Raging Bull," which it superficially resembles.) The purity of Cobb's orneriness is terrifically funny, and the hopelessly contradictory nature of his literary project is funnier still: for the sake of sensibilities more delicate than his own (that is, just about everybody else's), he tries to deny, revise, and justify behavior that he isn't, in fact, especially ashamed of. (The actual book, "My Life in Baseball: The True Record," which was published shortly after Cobb's death, in 1961, has a bizarrely defiant tone. Cobb, with Stump's help, tries to sound reasonable but can't quite pull it off. Pleading self-defense to explain away his most heinous acts, he winds up, as the incidents accumulate, revealing a paranoid streak of Nixonian magnitude.) And the unprincipled old man's relationship with his young ghostwriter is a rich source of comedy, a kind of gallows farce of mutual dependence and mutual distrust. Cobb knows that Stump is hoping he'll die before the book is finished; that would leave the writer free to publish his own version of Cobb's life, without the subject's approval. Furtively, Stump is working on two books, hiding his manuscript of "the true story" from Cobb as they travel together around the country. When Stump threatens Cobb by saying, "I'll write *slow*," Cobb shoots back, "I'll die slow." And he does. Waging a war of nerves against Ty Cobb is a risky undertaking: Stump displays some unexpected talent for deviousness, but he doesn't enjoy the struggle the way Cobb does. The old man beams with wicked delight at every small victory over his collaborator. Cobb can't beat the Reaper, but he has the consolation of knowing that he's still good enough to outfox Al Stump.

Although "Cobb" certainly doesn't glorify its protagonist, it isn't one of those movies whose sole purpose is to debunk a legend. In Cobb's case, there wouldn't be much point. Despite the attempted whitewash of "My Life in

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Baseball," his reputation for malevolence has survived undiminished. This movie's Cobb is precisely what we expect him to be: a vicious, sly, unpredictable, and inhumanly single-minded competitor—a man who thrives on disruption and bare-knuckles conflict. And, despite conforming perfectly to our image of him, he still manages to shock us—in part, perhaps, because he so enthusiastically violates the idea that a seventy-three-year-old man with a terminal disease might experience a few regrets about the way he has lived, or might, at least, want to avoid adding fresh offenses to an already lengthy record of abominable behavior. Stump accompanies Cobb on a series of journeys: a harrowing, reckless drive, in a blizzard, down a mountain road from Tahoe to Reno, where Cobb, in search of "some pussy," tries to rape a cigarette girl (he's impotent, so he settles for paying her to spread the story that he's a great lay); a cross-country trip to the Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, where Cobb ends up screaming insults at his fellow baseball immortals; and, finally, a trip, in a hearselike limo, to the ballplayer's childhood home, Royston, Georgia, where the simmering tension between Cobb and Stump comes to a boil. What startles the writer—and us—is the unseemly force of the old man's will. Cobb's travels around the country are a vivid demonstration of his willingness to push every situation to the limit, to level everyone in his path. In life, as on the diamond, Cobb's scorched-earth approach produces continual unpleasant surprises. Even if you think that you know what he's going to do, the way he does it—the degree of speed and violence that he brings to every act—knocks you flat.

Tommy Lee Jones, in the spirit of the man he's playing, attacks this role with breathtaking ferocity. He barks out Cobb's profane, splenetic lines so quickly and so decisively that they seem to create ripples, aftershocks: their impact is too strong, and too sudden to be absorbed immediately. And his gestures have a kind of savage abruptness, an aura of impatience that charges every moment with the threat of brutality. It's a fearless, scary, exhilarating performance. Jones doesn't look a bit like the real Cobb, but he seems to embody the menacing, thrilling volatility

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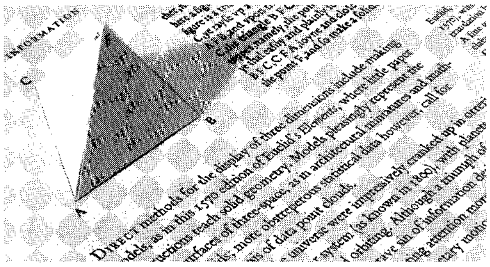

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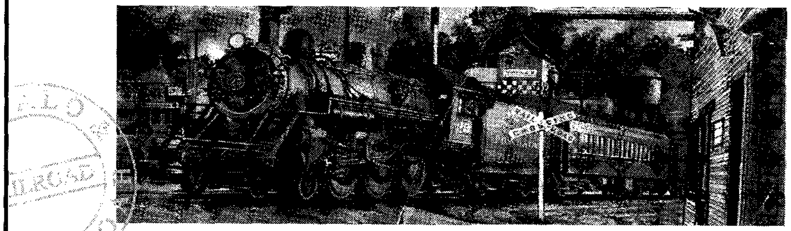

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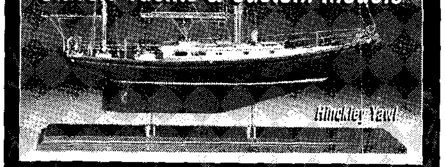

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that made Cobb unique. Watching Jones, you understand what it must have been like to play against Cobb (or, worse, to know him personally), to feel the tingle of anxiety that his presence on the base paths generated. You know that you can't take your eyes off this guy for a second.

There isn't a trace of sentimentality either in Jones's acting or in Shelton's writing. Cobb, even as he nears his lonely, comfortless death, never goes soft on us, never betrays the slightest vulnerability—except, maybe, in his obsession with conning history into accepting his heroic version of himself. (One of the many sly ironies in this picture is that its hero's enormous vanity is actually his most attractive human quality.) But Cobb doesn't need our sympathy. In the end, Stump writes Cobb's book and puts away his own. (His unsanitized biography, "Cobb," was published only a few weeks ago.) Cobb, as always, gets his way by sizing up his opponent (everyone, even someone whom he calls a friend, is essentially an adversary) and exploiting the flaws he finds. Stump's flaw turns out to be one that many of us in the audience share. "I needed him to be a hero," he confesses in the film's final moments. "It is my weakness." Probably no one who was entranced as a child by the romance of sports is ever entirely free of that admiration for skill and daring, that reverence for the most and the best. And lurking somewhere in our consciousness, perhaps, is the idea that a genius like Cobb is inherently monstrous, unnatural—that his achievement as a ballplayer is somehow inseparable from his horrible inadequacy as a human being. "Cobb" is a wonderful movie: it's a raucous, brazenly entertaining exploration of some uncommonly subtle ideas about the relationship between character and creativity. Shelton has made a grimly comic portrait of the artist as an old coot, and he shows us, in the process, what one incomparable athlete's art consisted of: violence, exile, and cunning. ♦

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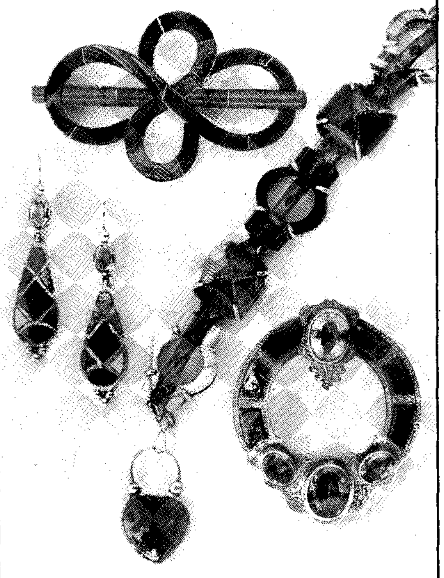
[*From the Detroit Free Press*]

The escape will prompt a full review of the department's policies on prison security, Engler said. "We'll overlook things from the top to the bottom and from the bottom up," he said.



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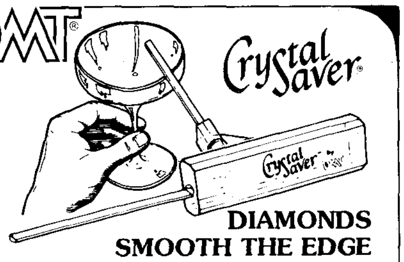

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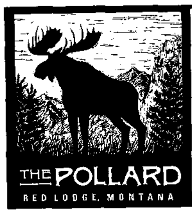

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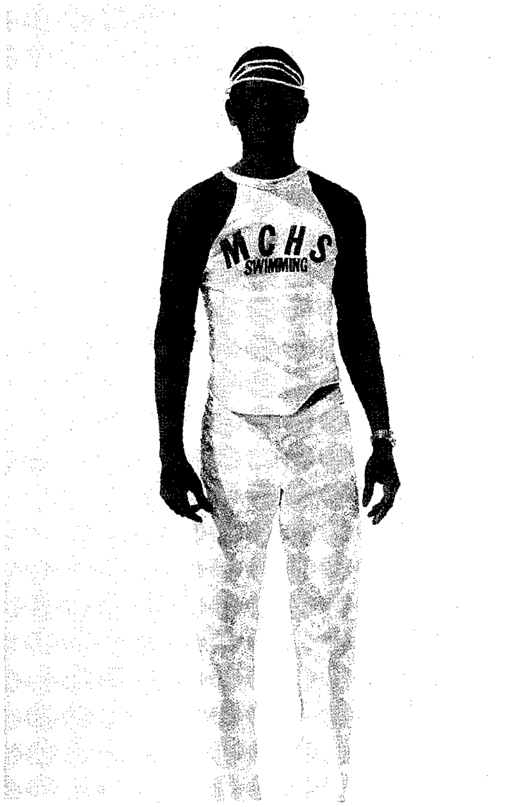
THE ART WORLD

BLACK STUDIES

BY ADAM GOPNIK

SAY this for the Whitney Museum of American Art: it does what it does because it believes in what it is doing. Like Charlie Brown running up to kick that football autumn after autumn, the museum keeps returning to its pet social issues and concerns, and though the Lucys of a hostile press yank the ball away, the Whitney keeps coming back for another try. The museum is routinely knocked for being in vogue, but by now this is unfair. When Charlie Brown charges at that ball, he is keeping a faith; he may be quixotic, but you cannot call him trendy.



"Tuff Tony," by Barkley L. Hendricks, 1978.

The Whitney's latest big, socially conscious effort, after the Biennial and the Basquiat show, is called "Black Male: Representations of Masculinity in Contemporary American Art." The show's aim is to take apart a cultural construction: those stereotypes of African-American men which have resulted in a set of visual clichés demonizing or marginalizing them—the black man as sex object, demon, gladiator, etc. Given the desperate, not to say hopeless, mess of race relations in this country, it's hard to imagine a worthier topic to look into—though whether it can be looked *at* is another question. Since this is a show that speaks to the liberal conscience where it is rightly most tender, it has been granted the kind of immunity from criticism which is a near relation to condescension. In spite of its "explosive" subject, the show is flat and dispiriting, and even visually inert—"subdued" is the euphemism that one sympathetic critic arrived at. But this disappointment, one notices, is itself being referred to in a gingerly way. A squashy, liberal response has taken shape: there is nothing wrong with the ideas that govern the show, but maybe something is a bit off in the particulars of its execution. The truth, I think, is just the reverse: the show includes several fine, and even important, works of art; the flatness is built right into the idea. The show is lifeless and academic because it has surprisingly little to do with the actual experience of real people anywhere in the world.

The first difficulty the show presents, and then ducks, is that, while black identity is one of the big American subjects—a central subject of American literature, and, in a more elliptical way, the defining subject of American music—it has not been much of a subject for American art. In fact, most of the contributors to the catalogue sensibly bypass talking about "art" at all, and concentrate instead on Michael Jordan, the Huxtables, and so forth. A show on another shibboleth of the past ten years—"gender," or representations of the female—would

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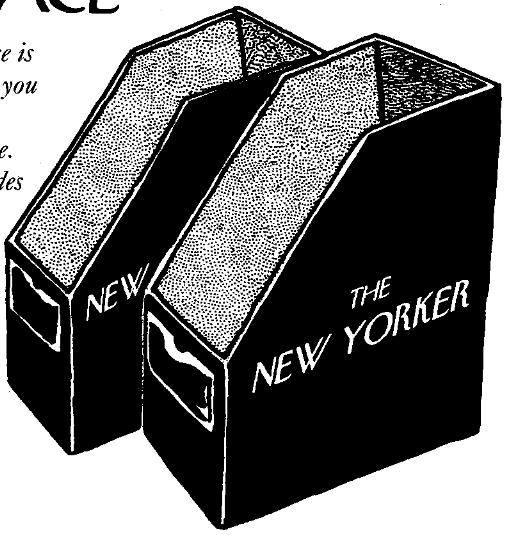

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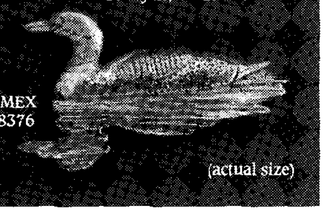

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present a nice array of curatorial choices. So would a show about sexual orientation. But there has been very little art intended for museums that takes as its subject the representation of black men, because of yet another shibboleth—class, obviously—and also because of the less discussed problem of "tradition." The Whitney show is one more case in which curators who are obsessed with social history tend to be naïve about what social history has to teach. Social crises don't necessarily produce "art"; a lot of the time, they don't even produce images. (Art historians have been searching for centuries for signs in late-fourteenth-century art of the effects of the Black Plague, which killed every third person in Europe during that period.)

Inevitably, because memorable art having to do with the black male is thin on the ground, the show itself becomes a stereotyped and predictable cultural construction. Robert Mapplethorpe's phallic nudes, for instance, are trotted out once again—they get a whole wall, in fact—simply because the models happen to be black. Yet in last year's Biennial Mapplethorpe's nudes were the subject of Glenn Ligon's intelligent critique of the way they turned a man into a sex object, and, in any case, the nudes are no more about race than Herb Ritts' nudes of Cindy Crawford are about gender. What they are about is sex, which tends to obliterate distinctions.

The most arresting art in the show is concerned less with deconstructing stereotypes than with seeing how far a cliché will get you if you stick to it long enough. Robert Colescott's parody of American-history painting, in which "Washington Crossing the Delaware" is recast with an ensemble of "Sambo" clichés, is funny just because it's so brazen. Colescott understands that a cliché turned back on the tormentor who created it becomes a parody of him. There are three very fine realist portraits from the nineteen-seventies by Barkley L. Hendricks, in each of which a young black man in a kind of costume (the militant, the homeboy, the playground jock) is placed against a white background, so that the soulful individual seems to be measuring himself against a conventional image. Hendricks' pictures are as exact and as coolly com-

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posed as August Sander's photographs; the dialogue between type and individual is their subject, and they alone make the show worth seeing. In a similar, if more sentimental vein, Andres Serrano's huge photographic portraits of homeless men achieve some of the pathos and dignity that they so obviously strive for—though this pathos is closer to Dorothea Lange than to Sander. Some of the video and conceptual work, too, is haunting—even the collective X-PRZ's numbing, repetitive slide-and-video show. And there are some works that are far removed from the conventions of rage, among them Fred Wilson's "Guarded View," whose four headless black museum guards make the point that service workers are the chief embodiment of the black-male image in most cultural institutions; Carl Pope's installation of parody police trophies, each one a burlesque commemorating a police killing of a black man; and, particularly, Kevin Everson's grim distillations of prison atmospherics. However you feel about the point being made in these works—and it is hard not to think that some of them are undercharged or overinflated—they radiate a weary, implacable bitterness that is more frightening than turbulent anger.

Much of the rest of the show, though, consists of the kind of familiar post-conceptual political tableaux that claim to expose the tendentious methods of the advertising culture while in fact exemplifying them. Adrian Piper's series "Vanilla Nightmares" adds sketches of desperate black faces to pages taken from the *Times;* the odd thing is that Piper's drawings look like illustrations for The Week in Review. Tim Rollins and his K.O.S. group "comment on" the image of Malcolm X by drawing a monogram across pages of his autobiography, while Glenn Ligon makes paintings of quotes from Richard Pryor's great, scabrous monologues. (The curator of this exhibition, Thelma Golden, in her opening essay in the catalogue, remarks that Ligon "claims Pryor's text, for the oddly insightful cultural criticism it is." Whoever has seen or heard five minutes of Richard Pryor in action doesn't need to be told that Pryor is "insightful," and why does Pryor's vision need to be "claimed" in the first

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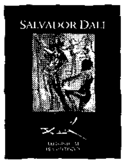

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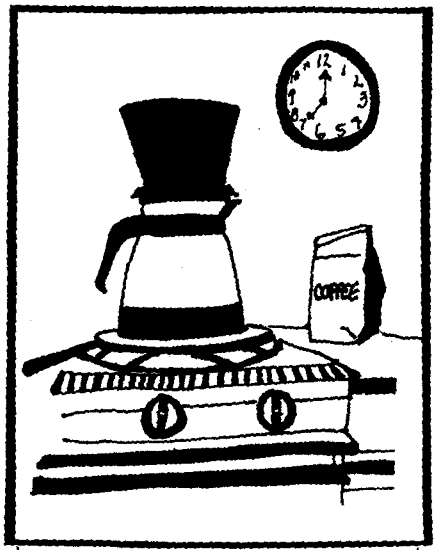

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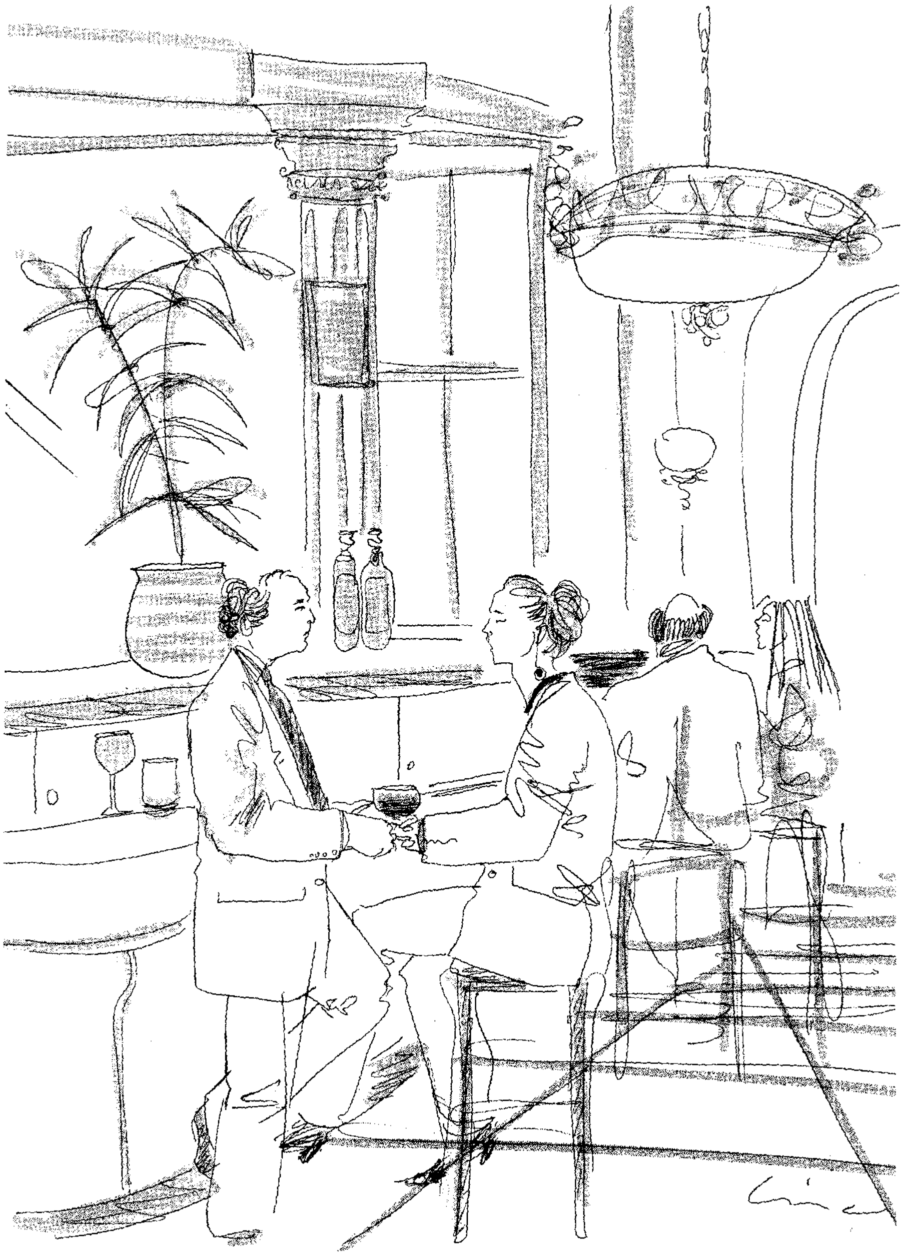

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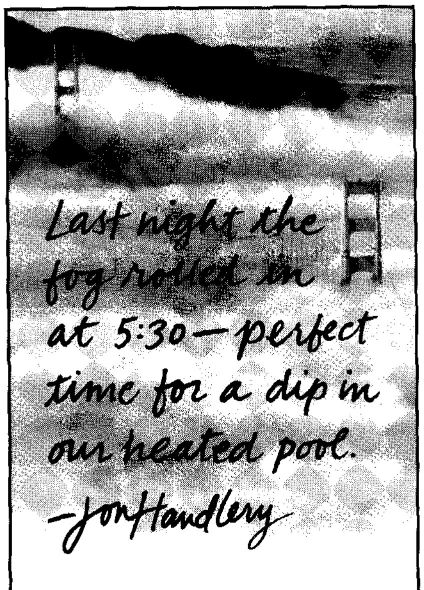
place?) Jeff Koons contributes a photograph of Moses Malone selling sneakers, which makes the point that sneaker companies use basketball players to sell sneakers.

The show is intended to be socially therapeutic: its aim is to make you face the socially constructed mental images of black men, so that by confronting them—or, rather, seeing artists confront them on your behalf—you can make them go away. The trouble is that the entire enterprise of "disassembling social images" rests on an ambiguity in the way we use the word "image." Mental images are not really images at all, but instead consist of complicated opinions, positions, doubts, and passionately held convictions, rooted in experience and amendable by argument, by more experience, or by coercion. Our mental images of black men, white judges, the press, and so on do not take the form of pictures of the kind that you can hang up (or "deconstruct") on a museum wall, any more than our most heartfelt beliefs can actually be found in our chests. Hitler did not hate Jews because there were pictures of swarthy Semites with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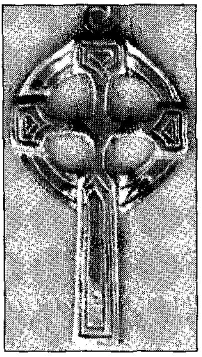

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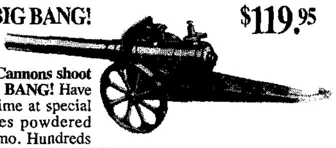

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big noses imprinted on his cerebellum; racism does not exist in America because the picture of O. J. Simpson on the cover of *Time* is too dark. The view that visual clichés shape beliefs is both too pessimistic, in that it supposes that people are helplessly imprisoned by received stereotypes, and too optimistic, in that it supposes that if you could change the images you could change the beliefs. In fact, visual clichés are probably the *weakest* link in the whole chain of racist thought. (One of the most striking aspects of the Susan Smith case was that even the police in a small Southern town became suspicious when all she could produce was a stereotyped and unparticularized image of a black man to stand as her demon; the emptiness of such a visual cliché is as apparent as its tendentiousness.)

The show's endless harping on representation reduces controversies to reflexes, and only adds to the irrationality of the tragic obsession with race in America. Like it or not, pictures are one of the things that people use to express their thoughts. Those thoughts may be ugly, half formed, vicious, or crude, but they remain thoughts, and not habits imprinted on passive minds by a sea of cultural "representations." Our conclusions about the world are not the consequence of a poor collecting policy in the picture gallery in our minds.

This ultimately escapist fixation on representations explains why the more fashionable academic contributors to the Whitney catalogue so strangely accept the premises of the mass culture that they intend to criticize. "Image is everything," Andre Agassi says in the Canon ads, and the contributors to the catalogue agree. Even if you turn the conversation strictly to media images, as opposed to fine-art images, as the catalogue essayists do, it's still hard to believe that these images have quite the power that's ascribed to them. The notion that there might be a gap between people's real experience and any image is as foreign to a cultural-studies maven like Andrew Ross, who contributes a particularly sentimental essay, as it is to Wayne and Garth or Beavis and Butt-head—more foreign, in fact, because the joke with Wayne and Garth is that they see the gap but prefer the

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images. (Beavis and Butt-head see the images and prefer the gap.) Writing about the image of rap musicians, for instance, Ross insists that "socially denied people . . . tend to opt for vehicles that are the least likely to be culturally influenced by the powerful," when a moment's glance at MTV shows that the really depressing thing about rap imagery is that it is so influenced by Hugh Hefner's idea of style and Larry Flynt's idea of sex.

"The real struggle is over the power to control images," Thelma Golden writes in her catalogue essay. The sad truth is that the power to create images is exactly what the oppressor is always ready to give up. Cultural politics aren't politics. The Soviets for years let the Estonians prance around in colorful folk costume; the Irish nationalists fought for a language and a mythology, and next thing they knew they had a nice little folk culture all to themselves. What the organizers of the show want from popular imagery and from art is what we all want—that the way the pictures look corresponds more or less to the way we feel about the part of life they're trying to portray. The problem is that achieving this fit is a job that, like making art itself, can only be done by piecework.

A better insight into the relation between racism and public imagery lies near at hand—right in the catalogue, if anyone would pay attention. Ralph Ellison's "Invisible Man" is cited there again and again, but it seems to be the novel's words rather than its meanings that get heeded. The tragedy of Ellison's protagonist was not that he couldn't control his image but that he had arrived at a dead end by becoming entrapped in the image game in the first place. (Ellison's "invisible man" was not just invisible to the white world—he was invisible to himself.) Ellison's hero was left with nothing much for consolation except some old records by Louis Armstrong, whose genius, as the hero finally sees, was that he was unaware that he was invisible—that he didn't give a damn about who controlled the "image" so long as he could make the music. "Life is to be lived, not controlled," Ellison's hero concludes, "and humanity is won by continuing to play in face of certain defeat." ♦

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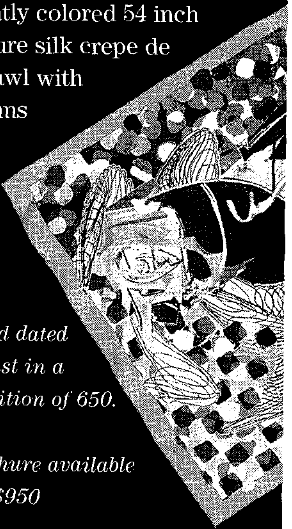

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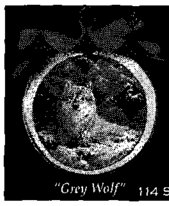

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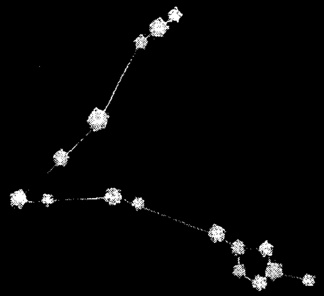

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LOST IN THE STARS

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FOR those, like myself, who knew next to nothing about Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, his image was always an uneasy mixture of nauseating whimsy ("The Little Prince") and romantic derring-do ("Night Flight" and "Wind, Sand and Stars"). It is Stacy Schiff's achievement in "Saint-Exupéry: A Biography" (Knopf; $30) not only to explain this apparent contradiction but to bring a legend alive. On the one hand, Saint-Exupéry was one of the great pioneers of aviation, a hero of France, and the most widely translated author in the French language, and, on the other, a member of that gruesome tribe—the Boys Who Never Grow Up. For Saint-Ex, as he was known to his colleagues, childhood was a lost golden age, its haunting memory both a blessing and a curse.

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry was born in Lyons in 1900, into a family of minor nobility. His father, Jean de Saint-Exupéry, who worked for an insurance company, died before Antoine was four, and the five Saint-Exupéry children were brought up in two beautiful châteaus—one, at Saint-Maurice-de-Rémens, belonging to a great-aunt, and the other, near Saint-Tropez, to their maternal grandparents. It was in the former, with its mysterious attics and handsome, wooded park, that Antoine created what he described as "the secret kingdom" of his childhood, his "interior world of roses and fairies." All his life, he was dogged by nostalgia for his early years. Well into adulthood, he wrote, "This world of childhood memories will always seem to me hopelessly more real than the other."

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry: Stacy Schiff's biography illuminates the extraordinary life of the French Peter Pan.

The little Saint-Exupérys were indulged by their mother, Marie, who was loving, pious, and unceasingly attentive. The children were notorious in the neighborhood for unruly behavior, and Antoine, with his head of golden curls, was the most willful and unruly of them all. In tune with the times, he was fascinated by early experiments in flight and, at the age of twelve, attempted to construct an airborne bicycle. He also read avidly—his particular favorites were Jules Verne and Hans Christian Andersen—and began composing poetry at an early age. This he did mainly at night, ruthlessly waking up his brothers and sisters and dragging them into his mother's room in the small hours to hear him declaim his most recent composition. (It was a habit that continued in later life. He thought nothing of telephoning his friends at three in the morning, and while

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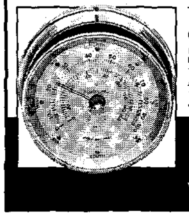

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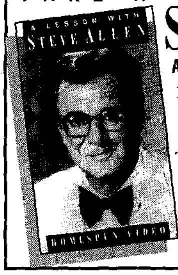

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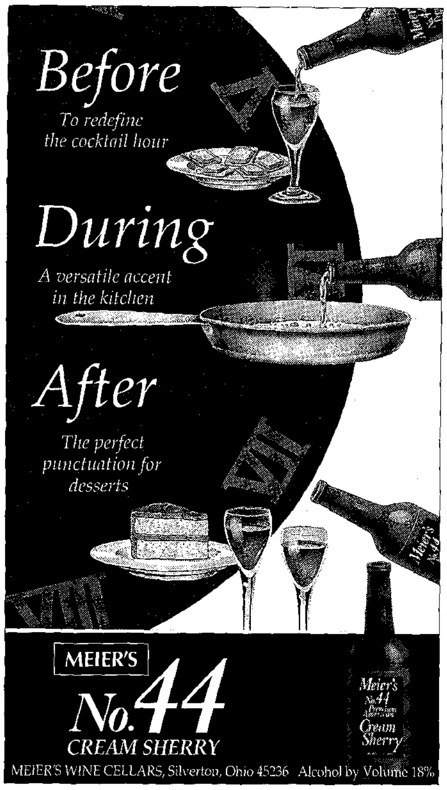
he was in North Africa during the war he force-fed Benzedrine to his patient mistress so she would stay awake long enough to read through all five hundred pages of his work in progress.)

Unsurprisingly, the adult relatives of the Saint-Exupéry children regarded them as horribly spoiled, and intermittently did their best to impose discipline, which the children's doting mother never could bring herself to administer. It was this disapproving attitude of aunts and uncles, Schiff suggests, that inspired the contempt of the narrator in "The Little Prince" for the grownup world. "I have lived a great deal among grown-ups," he says. "I have seen them up close. That has not much improved my opinion." Mme. de Saint-Exupéry, however, was the exception: her son saw her as the font of tenderness. "He wore this fierce maternal love as a sort of cloak wherever he went, pulling it more closely around himself as he aged," Schiff writes.

Antoine failed to distinguish himself at school, failed again as a naval candidate at the École Bossuet in Paris, and, as a last resort, enrolled at the Beaux-Arts to train as an architect, showing, a fellow-student remarked, as little aptitude for architecture as for dentistry. He supported himself on money that he borrowed from his mother, often lodging simply but eating lavish dinners in the grand houses to which his family name provided access. Even when he was established as a writer, Saint-Ex was never part of the international literary society in Paris—the world of "Stratford-on-Odéon," of Pound, Hemingway, and Joyce (although when Stuart Gilbert, the translator of "Ulysses," came to render "Night Flight" into English, he was so perplexed by the subtleties of the language that he turned to Joyce for help). Ever the man of action, Saint-Ex was impatient with intellectuals and uneasy with the claustrophobic company of the *super-gratin littéraire*, preferring his aviator colleagues; his publisher, Gaston Gallimard; and a few French writers such as Malraux, Maurois, and Gide. While he was living in Paris between sojourns abroad, he chose to conduct both his working and his social life in cafés, starting the day at the Deux-Magots, then moving on to the Brasserie Lipp. But, however convivial the preceding hours, he usually finished the evening alone—as Schiff has it, "a drink at his elbow, a cigarette in hand,



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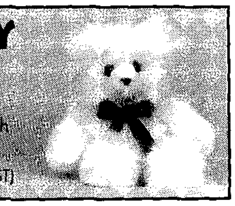

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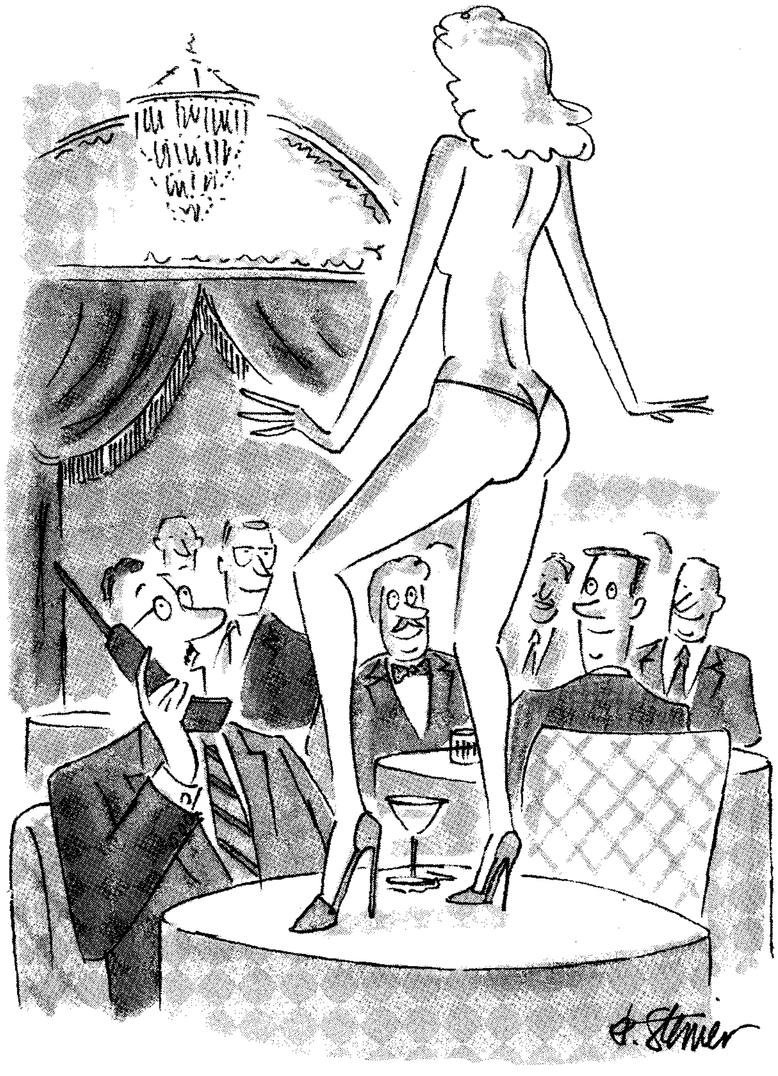
In 1921, Saint-Ex received his call-up, and from the Strasbourg military base, where he was training, he wrote to his mother, "*Maman*, if you only knew the irresistible thirst I have to fly." It is at this point, with his ascent into the air, that both Saint-Ex and Schiff's book take off. For these were the great days of flying, with France magnificently preëminent. Even before the start of the First World War, France held more flying licenses than the United States, England, and Germany together, and by 1918 the French aeronautics industry was one of the biggest in the world. Saint-Ex was awarded his pilot's license in 1922; his first flying job was with a commercial company, which specialized in taking tourists up for twenty-minute rides. After a brief period at this undemanding activity, he joined the Compagnie Latécoère, the most ambitious of the country's mail-carrying airlines, which became known as Aéropostale. France was then the second-largest colonial power, and Latécoère, with a fleet of Breguet 14s, was opening up a network of mail routes to French Morocco, to Dakar, and then to Buenos Aires, Rio, and Patagonia.

Nothing could have been better suited to the courageous, intransigent Saint-Ex than the life of a pilot with Aéropostale. The work was dangerous and demanding, the discipline rigorous, and the solitude unbroken. In his books, the descriptions of the hours spent alone in the cockpit are intensely evocative, as he recalls piloting his craft from Toulouse to Casablanca and Dakar, at the mercy of sandstorms, snow, and freak winds, flying low through mountain passes and over mile after mile of desert, where Moorish tribesmen shot at the tiny planes as though they were partridges. Although the Breguet 14 was the most reliable aircraft of the time, it was pitifully frail by current standards, with a wooden propeller, an open cockpit, and



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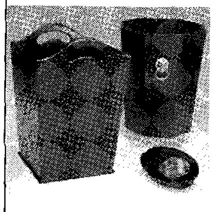

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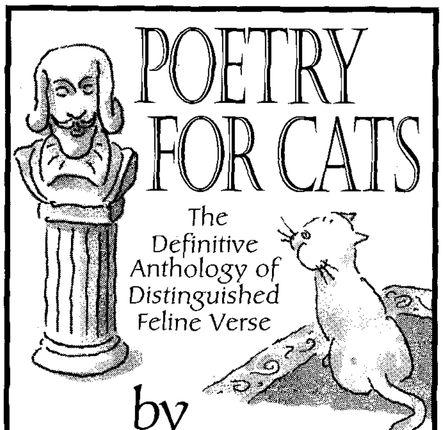

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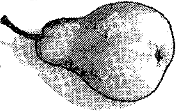

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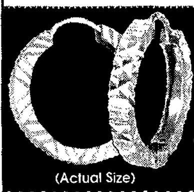

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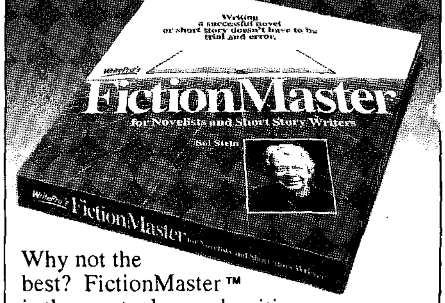
> With each new plunge the engine began vibrating so violently that the entire plane was seized with angry trembling. Fabien needed all his strength to control it. His head ducked far down inside the cockpit, he kept his eyes glued to the artificial horizon; for outside he could no longer distinguish earth from sky, lost in a welter of primeval darkness. . . . At this very moment the storm opened above his head and through a rift, like mortal bait glittering through the meshes of a net, he spied several stars. . . . At a single bound, as it emerged, the plane had attained a calm that seemed wondrous. There was not a wave to rock him, and like a sail-boat passing the jetty he was entering sheltered waters. . . . Beneath him, nine thousand feet deep, the storm formed another world, shot through with gusts and cloudbursts and lightning flashes, but towards the stars it turned a surface of snowy crystal.

After a year, Saint-Exupéry was made chief of the airfield of Cape Juby, in the western Sahara—probably the most desolate airstrip in the world. Never had he been happier. "I have a great need for solitude," he wrote. "I suffocate if I live for fifteen days among the same twenty people." He loved the wide spaces of the Sahara, and the silence:

> There is a silence of peace when the tribes are reconciled, when the cool evening falls. . . . There is a midday silence, when the sun suspends all thought and movement. There is a false silence, when the north wind has died and insects, torn like pollen from the interior oases, arrive to announce the sandstorms from the east.

He loved the isolation and independence, and the long, lonely flights, which are memorably depicted in his first novel, "Southern Mail" (1929). He made friends with the nomad children, and he came to depend on the fierce esprit de corps that existed between members of the company. "His religion was the mail," Schiff writes, "and in his devotion to it he was bound inextricably to his comrades." It was during this period that his reputation as a writer was founded, and through his writing that "la Ligne" became known to the world.



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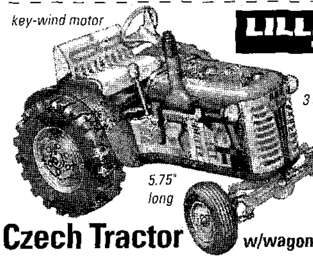

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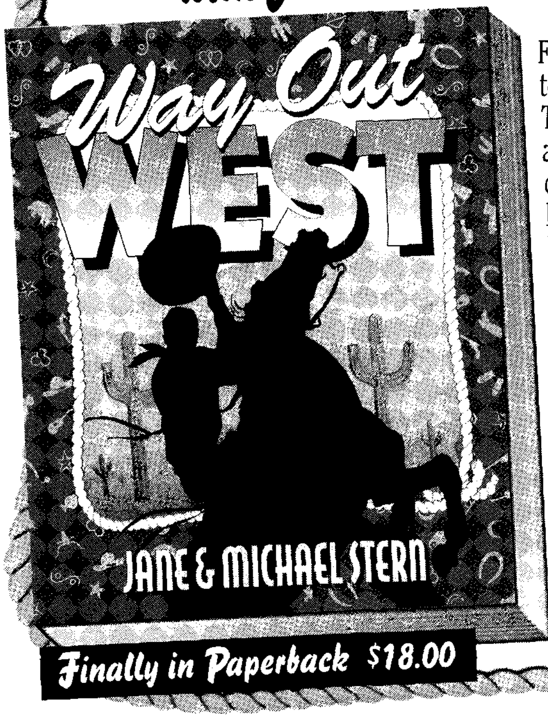
After Cape Juby, Saint-Ex was assigned to South America, to take part in the opening of mail routes linking Buenos Aires with Rio, Patagonia, and Paraguay. Here, in the violent tempests and grand silence of the Andes, he found a romance every bit as potent as that of the African desert. For the rest of his life, he talked about his memories of Patagonia, of glaciers and Indians, and of the sheep on Tierra del Fuego, "who, when asleep, disappeared in the snow, but whose frozen breath looked from the air like hundreds of tiny chimneys." Often he flew at night, and it was this nocturnal "battle with the stars" that animated "Night Flight," his second novel. The book was an instant success with the public; a film was made of it; and Guerlain produced a scent, Vol de Nuit, which was dedicated to Saint-Exupéry and sold in a bottle emblazoned with propellers.

For all his courage and his instinct for adventure, there remained in Saint-Ex something immature, a tendency to childishness. In life, as in his writing, he harked back constantly to childhood. Schiff notes that he frequently gave way to fretful displays of temper. He thought it funny to drop water bombs from upstairs windows, and a favorite game consisted of rolling oranges down the keys of a piano, which made it sound like Debussy. He was brilliant at word games and card tricks—"He spent less time writing than he did picking out the ten of spades," one of his editors lamented—and was expert at fabricating miniature helicopters from maple seeds and hairpins. He often illustrated his letters with cute drawings of himself in bed or with a toothache, and dated them "I-haven't-the-foggiest-idea" or "the twentieth century." In one he sketched the three parts of a journey—the last part a fat black square, "because it was night-time." He once excused himself to his American publisher for turning a chapter in late on the ground that his guardian angel had appeared and stayed to talk. (Schiff writes, "He could not very well have shown a guardian angel the door!")

When it came to women, Saint-Ex fell for those with whom he could sustain his world of make-believe. His first serious love was Louise de Vilmorin, a minor writer and femme fatale, who, like him, was deeply nostalgic for an "enchanted-garden childhood." In her mother's im-



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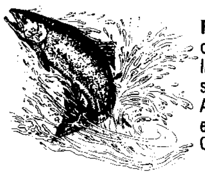

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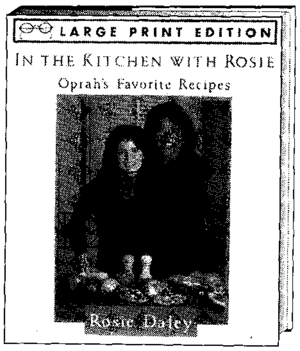

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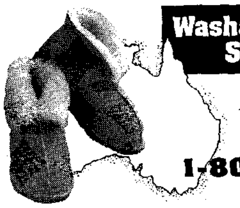

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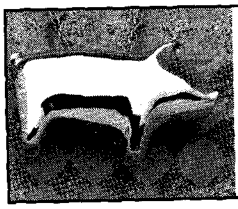

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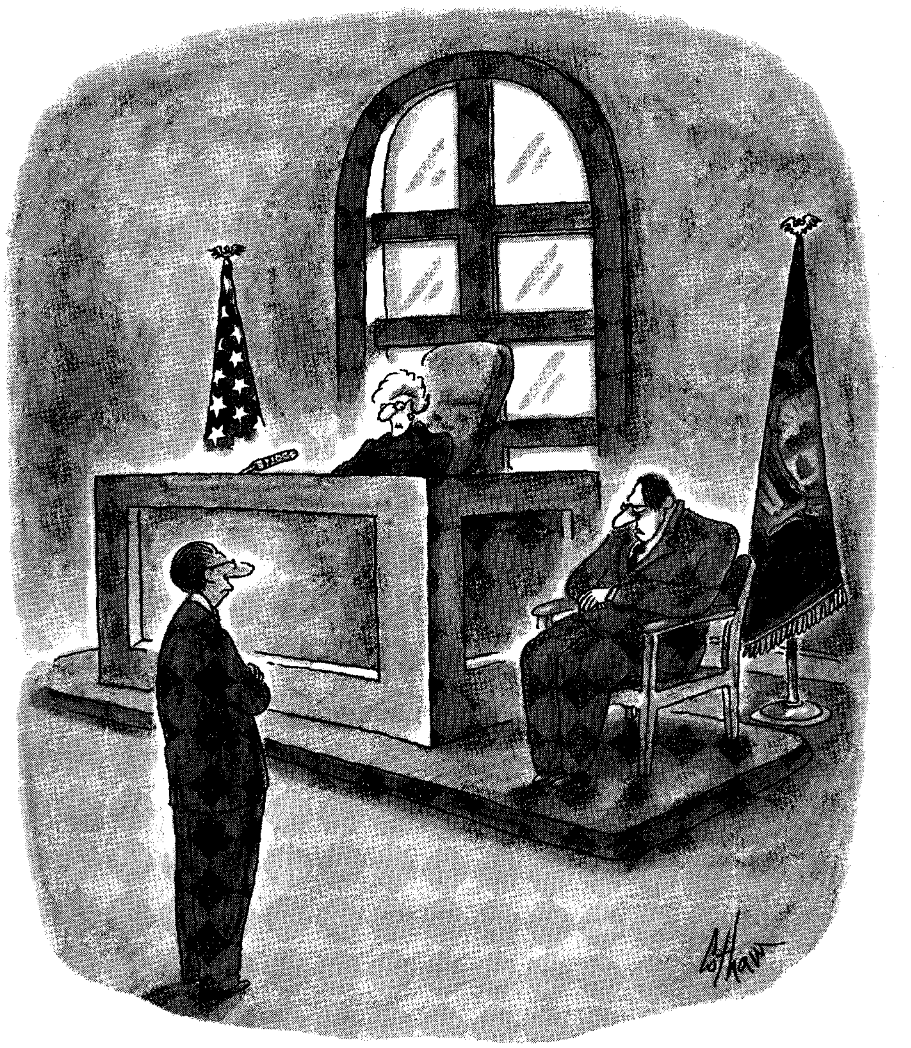


"I had ethical momentum, but I was unable to sustain it."

• •

posing house in the Rue de la Chaise, she told her stories, he recited his sonnets, and together they played at fairy prince and princess. But Loulou, for all her kittenish coquetry and otherworldly air, was a hardheaded Frenchwoman, and when the question of marriage arose Antoine's lack of fortune easily outweighed the fantasies they had woven together in her top-floor room.

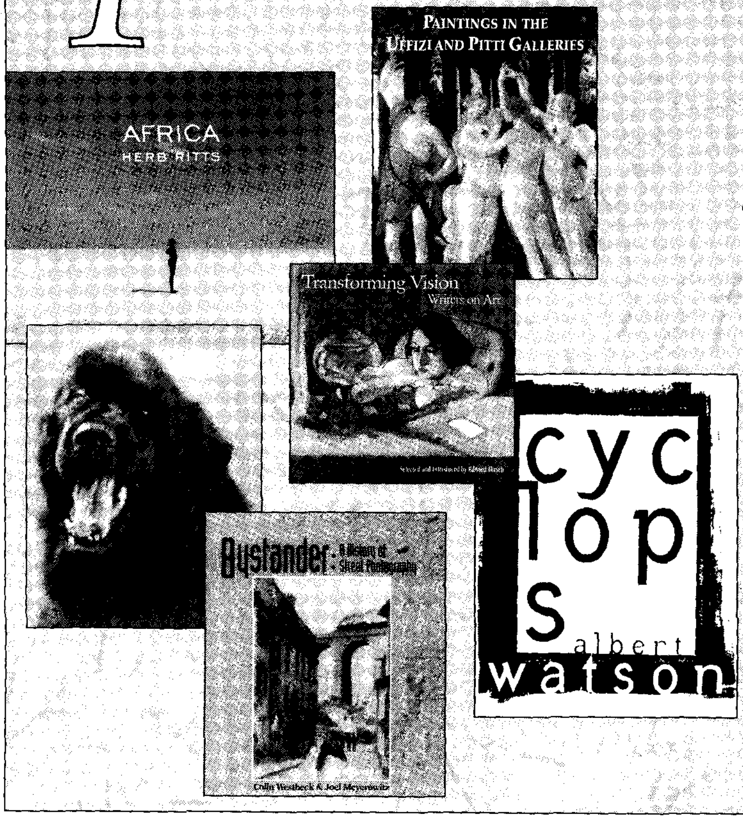
It was not until 1931 that Saint-Ex finally found a wife, Consuelo Gómez Carillo, who at first sight must have seemed like perfection. She was tiny and lovely and capricious. Seeing them together, a friend described the couple as a little bird perched on a huge stuffed bear, "that huge, flying stuffed bear that was Saint-Ex." Once, when asked where she came from, the young woman winsomely replied, "I have come down from the sky, the stars are my sisters." Her husband found this kind of thing charming—which was fortunate, as she had other traits that were less attractive. Consuelo was a mythomaniac of epic proportions, wildly extravagant, and ferociously jealous of her husband's success as both writer and airman. (However, she enjoyed playing the role of celebrity widow when Saint-Ex disappeared for several days in December of 1935 during a highly publicized flight over the Libyan Desert; and after his death she cashed in by opening a restaurant called Le Petit Prince, over which she presided wearing a jaunty sailor's cap with "Saint-Ex" in gilt letters on the peak.) Consuelo was bad-tempered, neurotic, flamboyantly unfaithful, and rarely on time. At a cocktail party in New York, Schiff relates, she passed the evening sitting under a large desk "from which a pale arm occasionally emerged, an empty martini glass affixed to its end."

The Saint-Exupérys quarrelled murderously and were always separating, but it was Consuelo to whom Antoine returned time and again, and without whom, he always felt, he couldn't live.

Soon after the publication of "Night Flight," in 1931, Saint-Ex's career as a commercial pilot came to an end. In spite of Latécoère's pioneering expansion, it had been forced into liquidation, and by August of 1933 there were no independent airlines in existence; they had been subsumed under the all-embracing Air France. Saint-Exupéry was by now a star, the Joseph Conrad of the skies. Although hopelessly irresponsible about money, and nearly always hard up, he made an adequate income from journalism and from propaganda work for the newly formed national airline. It was on a goodwill mission for France that, in 1938, he went to the United States to attempt a record-breaking flight from New York to Nicaragua. This came to a premature end with a crash landing in Guatemala City, from which he emerged alive but badly hurt.

In 1940, Saint-Ex returned to New York, intending to spend four weeks promoting the French war effort. In the event, he stayed two years, unable to see a role for himself in a fallen France. It was the most miserable period of his life. He was isolated and ill; he refused to learn English, and was crippled by fever, suffering the results of years of physical injury and neglect. A friend visiting him after an operation found him lying in a darkened room, silent and depressed, with a copy of Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales beside his bed. Schiff reports that Saint-Ex was politically at odds, too, with many of his compatriots in exile, stubbornly remaining neutral, and perceived as a Pétainist in the face of the majority support for de Gaulle. He consoled himself with a number of love affairs, but increasingly he sought a cozy intimacy rather than sex. He saw one of his young women friends, Silvia Reinhardt, almost every evening for over a year, in spite of the fact that she spoke no French and he almost no English. Saint-Ex, arriving late at night at her apartment, would settle on the chaise longue in her bedroom and, as Schiff memorably describes the scene, "read to her from his unfinished work, tears rolling down his face as he did so," while, "half-asleep on the floor, Silvia understood not a word." When Consuelo eventually arrived in the States to join her husband, she helpfully spread it about that high-altitude flying had rendered him impotent.

All this time, Saint-Ex was desperate to return to Europe and active participation in the war. He finally left America in April of 1943, to join up with a French squadron in Algeria. Needless to say, he was its most experienced and obstreperous member. His fellow-pilots were proud of him; his superiors regarded him as the most difficult command in North Africa. Although he was technically too old and far from fit—"only good for card tricks," his critics said—Saint-Ex insisted on being allowed to fly. He was drinking heavily to dull the pain of his old injuries, and had to be helped into his aircraft: "His boots were laced for him, as he could not bend over. He had to be fitted into and extracted from the cockpit." One pilot observed, "Saint-Ex was done for, and he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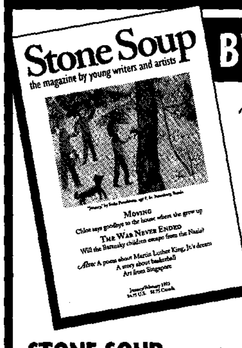

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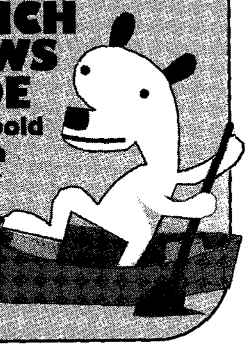

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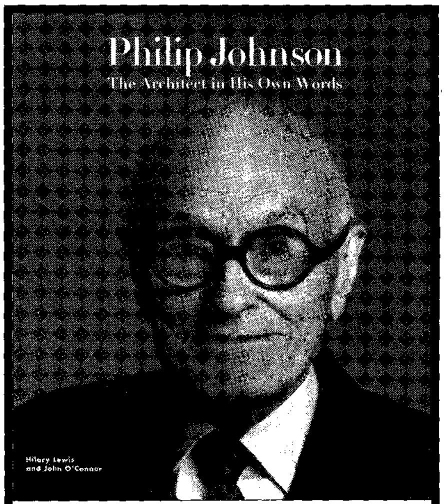
knew it." He made a number of sorties nevertheless, but he was both too impatient and too set in his ways to master the sophisticated technology of his aircraft, a United States Army Air Forces Lightning P-38. On one of his first missions, he damaged the wings of his plane, and a few days afterward, touching down at a hundred miles an hour and failing to pump his brakes, he ran off the end of the airstrip and crashed into an olive grove. The aircraft was wrecked, and Saint-Ex was grounded. Affronted and humiliated, he protested to his American operations officer, Leon Gray, "Sir, I want to die for France." Gray replied, "I don't give a damn if you die for France or not, but you're not going to do so in one of our airplanes."

Eventually, it was considered less trouble to restore Saint-Ex's flying status than to deal with his furious entreaties. In May of 1944, he was posted to Sardinia, and shortly afterward he disappeared on a reconnaissance flight over southern France. When the war was over, he was proclaimed a hero, accorded in records "*une mort glorieuse.*" At the end of a star-chasing life, Consuelo said—giving her husband his due for once—he had taken a meteoric fall. His brave death assured the growth of his posthumous fame, in particular that of his final work of fiction, "The Little Prince," written while he was in the United States and published in 1943.

That sad, sentimental story—with its quaint mop-top mannikin, on a visit to earth from his distant asteroid, impressing the stranded airman with his fey philosophy—became a seminal text for the sixties generation of dropouts and flower children. To others, it was unpalatably infantile. I never thought I could care about its author, but that was before I read Schiff's book. "Saint-Exupéry" is a remarkable biography; indeed, it is impossible to imagine the job better done. It is balanced, perceptive, thoroughly researched, and exceptionally well written. The author is both sympathetic and clear-sighted, and by the last page I had the same feelings as Adrienne Monnier, the famous bookseller of the Rue de l'Odéon, about whom Schiff writes, "Initially *Le Petit Prince* struck her as puerile, but she found herself drenched in tears by the end. She realized she was crying not over the book but, belatedly, for Saint-Exupéry." ♦

Philip Johnson
The Architect in His Own Words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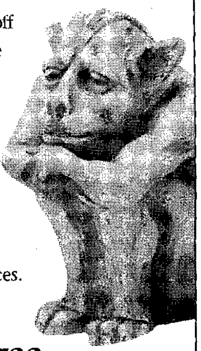

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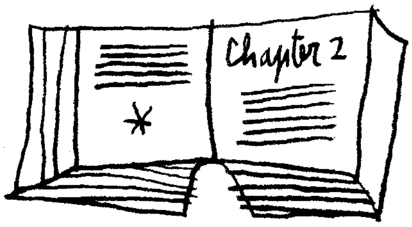

BOOKS BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

Green River Rising
by Tim Willocks
(Morrow; $23)

THE market has been flooded with hyperkinetic thrillers that attempt to provide the literary equivalent of movies like "Die Hard" and "Speed," but it's difficult to think of anyone who has written with the crazy conviction and energy that Tim Willocks brings to this novel. It is the story of an apocalyptic prison riot at a Texas penitentiary, but it has none of the quotidian grimness one expects from prison fiction. In fact, almost nothing in "Green River Rising" rings true, but as an ultra-violent comic-book fantasy the novel is great fun. Willocks' hero is Ray Klein, a doctor serving time for rape—he's innocent, except in the sense that we're all guilty, etc.—and the villains include a nasty warden named John Campbell Hobbes and a spectacularly angry alpha male named Agry, who unleashes legions of brutish fellow-psychopaths when his lover is transferred to another cellblock. The prison is a decaying Victorian monstrosity; after the inmates take over, it becomes an infernal gothic maze, and Willocks forces Klein to negotiate some fiendishly suspenseful tight spots on his way to a corpse-strewn happy ending.

Scar Tissue
by Michael Ignatieff
(Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $20)

AT first, this seems to be the story of a dutiful son's predicament as his once glamorous mother succumbs to a degenerative neurological illness. The unsurprising stages of the disease are plotted with thoughtful clarity: his mother can't find her glasses; then she repeats questions to which answers have just been offered; then she can't bathe herself. She ceases to recognize people or to care where she is; finally, she speaks gibberish. But Ignatieff's novel is really the story of the son's decline, which he convinces himself is an ascension. He neglects his own family to spend time with his nearly noncognizant mother, until his wife gives up on him. Meanwhile, he draws closer to his brother, who is a neurologist, and in the course of these encounters you realize that both men are preparing, in their own ways, for what they see as their hereditary fate. The novel dwells increasingly on the meaning of mind, memory and identity, but it is the glimpses of the mother when she was young—barefoot, with vermillion toenails, painting in her studio, or mischievously pushing her husband into a pond—that give the book its heart and life.

Taft
by Ann Patchett
(Houghton Mifflin; $21.95)

THAT Ann Patchett, who is white, should choose a black man as her narrator may raise some eyebrows. What's really peculiar, though, is the unself-conscious way this amiable novel reaffirms a writer's imaginative access to any and all experience. John Nickel is the manager of a bar called Muddy's, on Memphis's Beale Street, a thoroughfare with a storied past and an also-ran present—not unlike John. He's an ex-drummer, but he doesn't care to talk about it; he's only slightly less reticent about his estranged lover, Marion, who has moved to Miami with their son, Franklin. One February afternoon, John hires a skinny white girl named Fay Taft as a waitress, and she begins moving into the emotional quarters vacated by Marion and Franklin, stirring, by turns, John's romantic and paternal impulses. Asked where she's from, Fay answers, "East," but, despite her airy nonchalance, she bears the weight of a delinquent brother, Carl, and of the recent death of their father. John resurrects the deceased Taft as the focus of his musings on fatherhood; this invented narrative threatens to entangle him in the mixed-up lives of Taft's children, even as it intensifies John's longing for his own family. John is a quiet and decent man trying to hold his life—and everybody else's—together, and each sentence reflects it. The tone is so steady and strong that the increasingly dangerous surprises delivered here catch you up every time.

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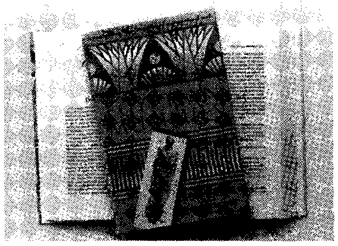
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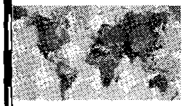

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by Harry Mathews
(Godine; $21.95)

THIS sly, funny tour de force is in the form of a diary by a guy—a low-powered businessman in a small, generic European city—who has been advised, after a nervous breakdown, to keep a journal for the sake of his mental health. The next thing you know, the journal is keeping him. Recording his experiences with increasing compulsiveness, he finds himself forgoing experience in order to have more time for recording, and soon the experience of recording overtakes all other experiences. His painstaking annotations of his relations with his wife, her brother, his mistress (who is also his sister-in-law), his son, and his best friend (who is also a colleague) lead him—eventually—to speculate about their involvements with one another. The never-named diarist provides enough information to keep readers perfectly clear about who is doing what to whom, so how is it that he himself is so slow to twig? It's not that he's stupid and it's not that he's crazy. It's something that lurks in the process of writing, and that something is the subject of this clever, dismaying reductio ad absurdum.

Vinegar Hill
by A. Manette Ansay
(Viking; $22.95)

WHEN Ellen Grier's husband, James, is unexpectedly laid off, he takes her and their children to his childhood home—or, rather, to the small town, Holly's Field, Wisconsin, where he was twisted into a damaged adult: at No. 512 Vinegar Hill the violent terrorize the weak, and the blighted feed on the healthy. James's mother, Mary-Margaret, always dresses in pink and cowers in a haze of infantile memories, and his father's hatred and contempt simmer so ominously that, when they ignite, our horror is tinged with relief. Ellen, meanwhile, is nearly buried alive under the weight of this small Catholic community's rigid convictions about marriage—convictions doubly condemned by Mary-Margaret's suffering and Ellen's own vibrant but thwarted potential for change. Ansay's Ellen, in fact, is so deeply perceptive that we don't always believe in the strength of her ties to provincial dogma. But, by taking us into the mind of every character for whom we could possibly feel compassion, Ansay transcends both feminist epic

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and Midwestern gothic to achieve, finally, the lunar world of tragedy. This world is lit by the measured beauty of her prose, and the book's final line is worth the pain it takes to get there.

The Mortician's Apprentice
by Rick DeMarinis
(Norton; $21)

In the defense-plant-fat San Diego of 1953, Ozzie Santee is being pinioned into marriage by the local undertaker's daughter, who can't tell the difference between a proposition and a proposal. Ozzie himself doesn't know if he loves this sexy, willfully unseeing girl, and he can't envision any alternatives other than his dead-end, hazardous factory job, the prospect of being his fiancée's father's apprentice, or the kind of college classes that are a reminder of why students' cries for "relevance" seemed so well founded a few years later. The highest comedy comes from the hormone-powered viciousness that Ozzie and his male pals hurl at one another—the inarticulate language of a deathly culture that one longs for the hero to escape from. ♦

RECOMMENDED

(Our choice of books recently reviewed on this page. The date of the note is given.)

In the Lake of the Woods
by Tim O'Brien
Houghton Mifflin (10/24)

The Eye in the Door
by Pat Barker
Dutton (9/5)

The Bird Artist
by Howard Norman
Farrar, Straus & Giroux (10/10)

Last Train to Memphis: The Rise of Elvis Presley
by Peter Guralnick
Little, Brown (10/31)

Learned Hand
by Gerald Gunther
Knopf (8/15)

Brecht and Company
by John Fuegi
Grove (9/26)

The Great Fires: Poems 1982-1992
by Jack Gilbert
Knopf (11/21)

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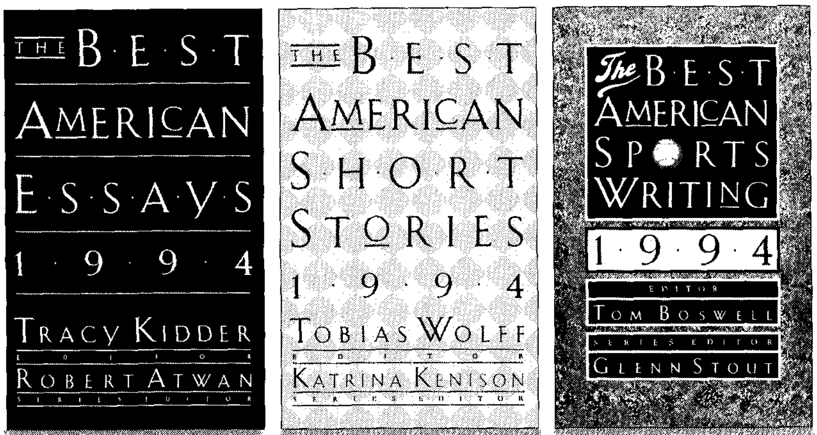

The Best American Essays 1994
Tracy Kidder, Editor
Robert Atwan, Series Editor

The Best American Short Stories 1994
Tobias Wolff, Editor
Katrina Kenison, Series Editor

The Best American Sports Writing 1994
Tom Boswell, Editor
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Stephen Jay Gould
Jamaica Kincaid
Cynthia Ozick
John Updike...

Sherman Alexie
Robert Olen Butler
Alice Elliott Dark
John Rolfe Gardiner
Barry Hannah
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Roxana Robinson
Jonathan Wilson...

Bud Collins
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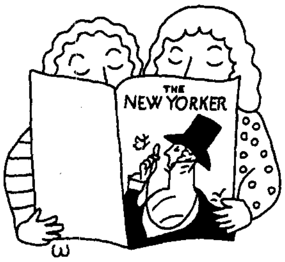

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ETHNICITY, GENETICS, AND CUTENESS

(Addendum to Recent Fearless Findings)

BY BRUCE McCALL

HUMAN cuteness was not only never measured but was a virtually taboo subject in America up to and beyond Reconstruction. (Ulysses S. Grant's magisterial two-volume "Personal Memoirs" of 1885-86, for example, completely sidesteps it.) The authors of this impeccably fair-minded inquiry were therefore astonished, but not surprised, that fifty-two per cent of white Americans in our meticulous study included the word "dimples" in their definitions of cuteness, while a similar number of African-Americans did not. This is unsentimental science, in no way contradicted by the fact that the physiognomy of the average African-American lends itself to no more and no fewer dimples than that of other clans or castes. To anticipate the firestorm of hysteria sure to be provoked in certain quarters by these findings: there are, of course, many cute African-Americans. Looking out the window just now, we saw three.

But this is not the issue. It might more cogently be asked, Are federally funded dimple-awareness programs the answer? Emphatically no. Not as long as African-Americans refuse to recognize the dimple—as obvious, after all, as the declivity in the fatty areas on your face. Comparisons with cowlicks and wattles were found to be invalid, if not spurious; so much for ethnicity. Dimples aside, we found cuteness to be broadly multidimensional and omnifaceted. Basques, alone with their sheep for days at a time, have no fewer than six words for it, disproving the theory of a culturally imposed mind control.

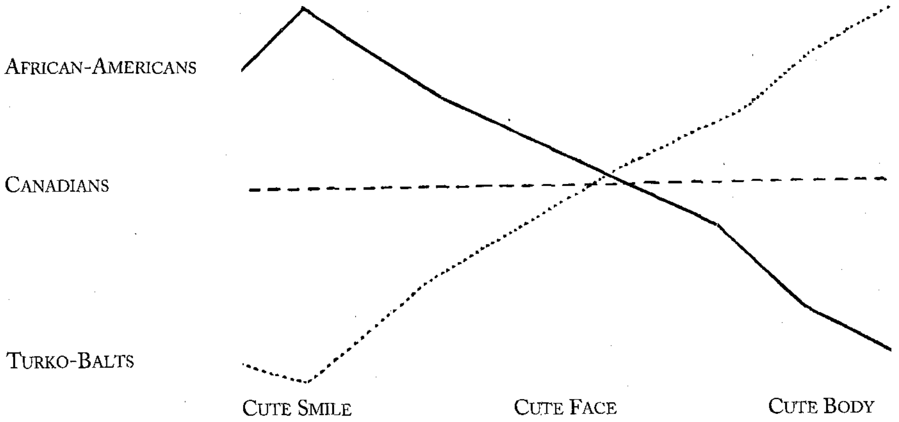
Cuteness would appear to have been a free-floating "rogue factor," in psychometric parlance, within virtually all ethnic and racial categories, since at least the wedding of the Duke of Windsor and Wallis Warfield Simpson. It is worth noting, in this context, that on the same weighted scale that places her contemporary Betty Boop at 100 in perceived cuteness, the snobbish and pushy Mrs. Simpson scores a remarkable 72. Rogue factor, indeed. Cuteness has been known to occur even in societies where women seldom shave their legs. (See Laurel and Hardy's "The Bohemian Girl," circa 1937.) The pioneer ethnometrician Miladovilovich's taunt, "Just show me a cute Herzegovinian and I'll eat the tassel on my fez," so eagerly trotted out by the proponents of cuteness-as-myth, can be easily discounted, but not here. More germane is the cute-face/cute-smile/cute-body trichotomy, dividing, we found, so sharply along the racial-cultural axis about to be delineated—come hell or high water—as to cut the fingers of the unwary.

Anomalies in any such sweeping study are sure to abound. For instance, twenty-eight per cent of immigrant male Sikh heads of household in the telltale 1890-1910 period took "cute smile" as a pretext for drawing knives. That no one knows why should hardly be blamed on the authors, who are up front enough to admit that why the remaining seventy-two per cent did not pull steel is also a statistical head-scratcher. This should not be interpreted to give high-I.Q. Asians cause for complacency. In the very next chapter, cuteness and its influence on the San Francisco Tong Wars of the early century will be all too clearly examined. So much for "environmental factors."

African-American cuteness would appear to vary little from norms already established for Hispanics, Inuits, Jews, and the like. We aren't advocating this, we're just reporting it. Whites the general reader will presumably already know about, since, according to standard demographics and Vegas odds, the general reader *is* white.

If nothing in this controversial study is comforting or nice, the authors can only borrow from the words of that latter-day avatar of the non-cute, Tina Turner, speaking for "The Ike and Tina Turner Revue"—and for tough-minded truth-seeking scientists everywhere—in saying, "We never, ever do nothing nice and easy."

Does this mean the authors aren't, personally, nice guys? That lies beyond the scope of this inquiry. We mean, you are, or aren't, a bigot. Nothing to do with us. ♦



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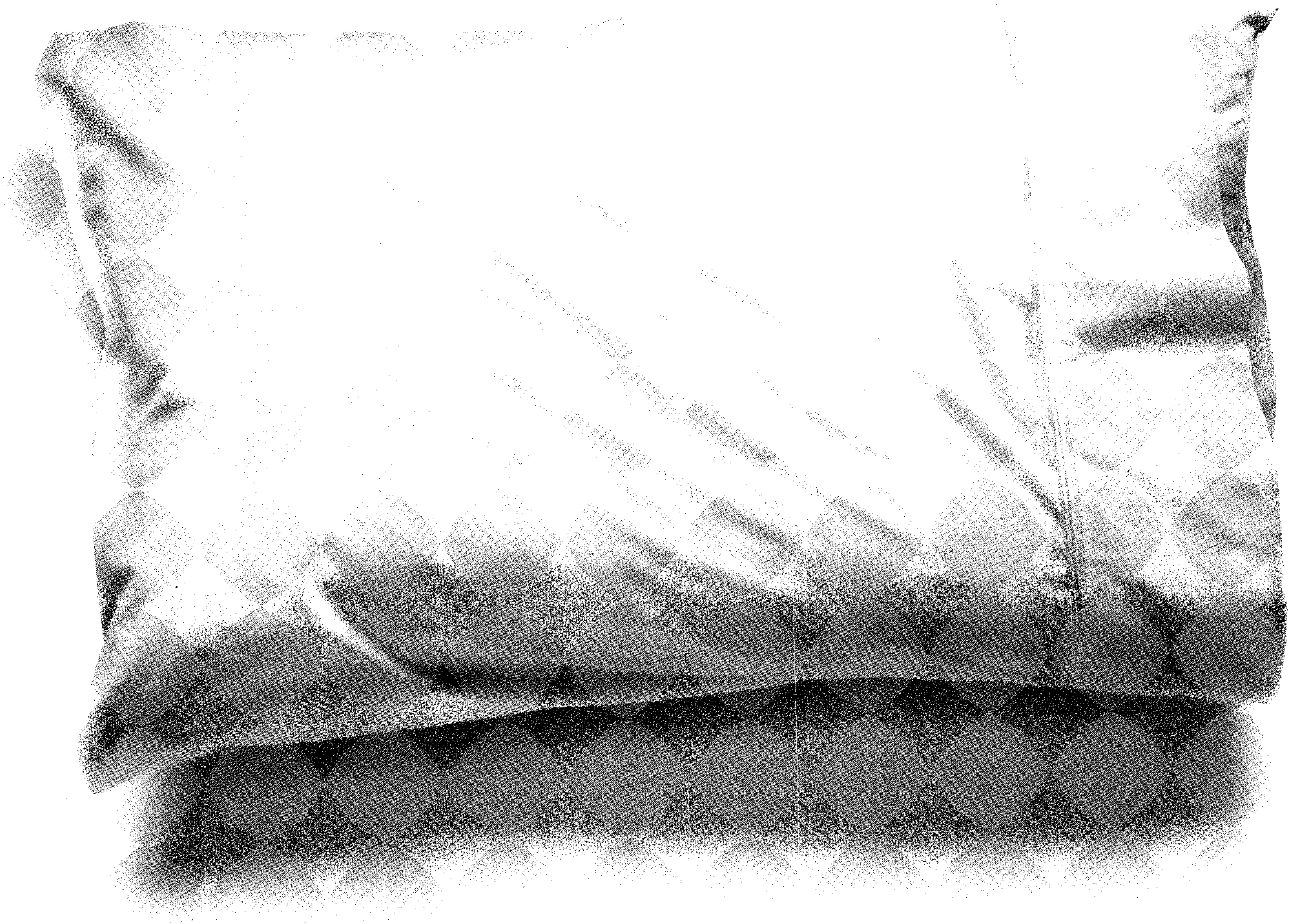

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